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September 15, 1999

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*Ravi Shankar*  
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# Bhavan's

## Journal

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आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।  
Let noble thoughts come to us from every side  
— Rigveda, 1-89-i



## Prayer

नमो विघ्नस्वरूपाय नमस्ते विघ्नहारिणे ।  
नमस्ते सर्वरूपाय सर्वसाक्षिणमोऽस्तु ते ॥

*Namo vighnasvaroopaaya namaste vighnahaarine*  
*Namaste sarvaroopaaya sarvasaakshin-namostute*

Obeisance to you (Ganesa) who are yourself obstacle  
and its remover; obeisance to you who are of the form of  
everything and witness to everything.

— The Ganesapurana 1. 63.

## Moksha



**T**HE Indian philosophical systems posit 'Moksha' as the ultimate goal of life. It is a state of liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. It is a state wherein the problem of evil, moral and physical, is overcome. S.N. Das Gupta defines it with almost scientific precision as follows :

"Emancipation or Mukti (or Moksha) means in the upanishads the state of infiniteness that a man attains when he knows his own self and thus becomes Brahman". The ceaseless course of transmigration is only for those who are ignorant. The wise man, however, who has divested himself of all passions and knows himself Brahman, at once becomes Brahman, and no bondage of any kind can ever affect him".

In the state of 'Moksha', the Atman becomes, like the

Brahman, pure intelligence, pure being, and pure blessedness. It is sat-chid-ananda - Existence, Consciousness, Bliss.

The 'Purusharthas' - that which men aspire for - are mentioned in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Dharma Shastras and the Puranas. These are : Dharma, artha, kama and moksha. 'Moksha' is the culmination of a life lived according to 'dharma' (principles of right conduct) which is sustained by fulfillment of legitimate desires (kama) and right means (artha).

One must yearn for 'Moksha' and thereby become a 'mumukshu'. He must discriminate between the permanent and the transient; be detached from the pleasures of life here and hereafter; and subject himself to the eight-fold spiritual discipline which alone can keep his mind steady in the pursuit of the goal. □

\* Brahman - Next issue

## *A Letter From the President*



# The Gandhian Way

Truth he held to be the highest principle of life.

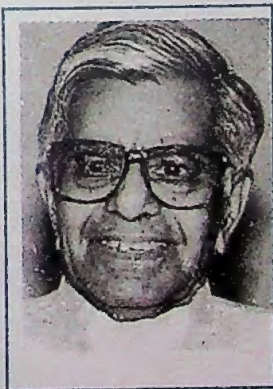
**G**ANDHIJI was heir to the great Indian spiritual tradition. The teachings of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita were woven into the very texture of his life. Gandhiji deliberately fashioned out his thoughts and actions in conformity with this. Truth he held to be the highest principle of life. "This truth", he said, "Is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal principle, that is God". As a corollary of truth, Gandhiji upheld non-violence as his lodestar. Gandhiji was inspired in his

activities by love, and nothing but love. And love meant for him not merely the matrix of non-violence, but service to the sick and suffering, the poor and the downtrodden and the lowly and the lost - the Daridranarayanans.

In Gandhiji's scheme of life with its ideal of 'plain living and high thinking', religion, as a spiritual and moral force, has a vital, all-pervasive influence. But no single religion is to have an exalted place, as all religions, in

their different ways, illumine the path to Godhead. Tolerance is, therefore, the key to peace and harmony in a society of people belonging to different faiths.

The Gandhian way of reconciling conflicts through



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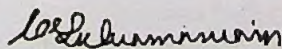
## Gandhiji led us the Promised Land of Freedom through non-violence. Let us again demonstrate that non-violence is the sovereign remedy to solve conflicts and bring about harmony and peace.

non-violence and discussion is beginning to yield concrete and lasting results as we look around the world - the breaking down of the Berlin Wall and the unification of the two Germanys, the emergence of the new South African Republic following the reconciliation between F.W. De Klerk and Nelson Mandela, the historic hand-shake of the Israeli Prime Minister, Rabin and PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, are all reaffirmations of the fact that non-violence alone would lead to lasting solution of conflicts, individuals, national and international. One recalls in this connection Martin Luther King's non-violent struggle against racial discrimination in the U.S.A.

Unfortunately, in India, the land of Gandhi, there are developments which are an antithesis of Gandhian

philosophy. We are faced with growing undiscipline, violence and corruption in our individual, institutional and national life. It is time for us in India to pause and think as to how to apply the Gandhian approach to these new problems and challenges.

Gandhiji led us the Promised Land of Freedom through non-violence. Let us again demonstrate that non-violence is the sovereign remedy to solve conflicts and bring about harmony and peace. Leading apolitical voluntary organisations should take the initiative in this delicate but very vital task. If we succeed, and succeed we must, there will be a far-reaching impact, not only on India and our sub-continent but on the course of human affairs the world over.



(C. Subramaniam)

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# "Remain United Always"

PRESIDENT K.R. NARAYANAN

**T**HE President of India, Shri K.R. Narayanan, addressing the nation on the eve of the Independence Day this year, highlighted, among other things, the need to :

1. remain united and prepared not only to meet war-like situations when they come upon us but even in normal times also; and

2. to gather political and social will to tackle poverty, illiteracy and under-nourishment of children.

We reproduce the text of the President's broadcast speech :



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**"When the national tri-colour flies  
atop the ramparts of the historic  
Red Fort and over a multitude of  
humble dwellings across the land,  
it will flutter in salute to the flower  
of our youth who sacrificed  
everything to preserve the honour  
of our flag"**

**O**n the eve of the 52nd anniversary of India's Independence, I have great pleasure in extending to all fellow citizens, whether living in India or abroad, my warm greetings and felicitations.

I send a special word of greeting and felicitation to our brave jawans and to our kisan and mazdoor brothers and sisters, who toil and sweat from dawn to dusk and keep our country going.

I would like, this year, to convey the boundless admiration and gratitude of the nation to our Defence and Para-military Forces. It is the death-defying

courage of our young men, hailing from every State, and every part of India, the sons of our common folk, fighting on the bleak and hazardous heights of Kargil, Batalik and Dras that protected India's sovereignty and territorial integrity, driving the intruders from our sacred soil across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. **Tomorrow, when the national tri-colour flies atop the ramparts of the historic Red Fort and over a multitude of humble dwellings across the land, it will flutter in salute to the flower of our youth who sacrificed everything to preserve the honour of our flag.** We must resolve now that their sacrifice does not go in vain.

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**"We are a peace-loving people by nature and tradition. We wish to live in peace with our neighbours and with the entire world. "**

Years ago, our First Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had noted a common failing of our country and observed that "the basic fact remains that we have yet to develop as a unified nation. Under some calamity or external danger, we may well unite. When the immediate danger is removed, we fall back into our respective shells and lose the sense of the whole. We try to get out of these shells and then, something happens that lays bare our inner urges and failings. Whether it is provincialism or caste, we still live in a tribal age."

Kargil has shaken us out of our narrow shells and forged a new national unity in the crucible of the common danger suddenly imposed on us. Friends, we hear voices from the other side threatening more Kargils in the future. We have to remain united and prepared not only when war-

like situations come upon us, but in normal times also, so that we are not ever again taken unawares by surprise attacks. We have to pay special attention to strengthening our armed forces, equip them with the latest weapons and force multipliers. **Hitherto our expenditure on defence has been one of the lowest in the world in terms of percentage of the GDP, much lower than that of our neighbours. It is incumbent upon us to rectify this imbalance.**

At the same time, let us remember that a country is defended not by arms alone but by wise policies and the strength of its economy, by the justice and cohesion of its society, by the unity of its people. **We are a peace-loving people by nature and tradition. We wish to live in peace with our neighbours and with the entire world.**

Indeed it was due to this passion for peace and our desire to avoid a fratricidal civil war, in the sub-continent, that the leaders of the Indian National Congress agreed to the partition of our motherland into India and Pakistan. It is ironic that this great sacrifice on our part and our desire to live in peace with Pakistan have not prevented unprovoked aggression and subversion against our country. In October 1947, in the very first year of our Independence, Pakistan launched an attack on us in order to wrest Jammu and Kashmir from the Indian Union.

On October 29th Mahatma Gandhi said at his prayer meeting in Delhi that now that "the Maharaja of Kashmir has announced his decision to accede to the Indian Union ..... and that he has taken refuge in the Indian Union, he should be protected". Answering the question as to what should the small band of Indian soldiers sent to Srinagar by air do, Gandhiji said: "Let them fight to the end. The job of armed soldiers is to march ahead

and repel the attacking enemy. They die in fighting, but never retreat". It was this advice by the Father of the Nation and the apostle of non-violence that our brave soldiers followed in 1947 and in the recent attack on us in the Kargil area in Jammu and Kashmir. In January 1948 Gandhiji said: "We must never, under any circumstances, treat anyone as our enemy.... My reason and my heart tell me that, if for some reason, we are unable to forge friendship between Muslims and Hindus, not only here but in Pakistan and in the whole world, we shall not be able to keep our free India for long. It will pass into the hands of others, and the freedom gained by both India and Pakistan will be lost". On the awful prospect of a war between India and Pakistan he further warned, with his shrewd insight into the real politick of the world, that "If you imagine to-day that we can fight and win, let me say that even before you do so, some other world power is going to swallow us up. It will swallow in fact, both the countries. If all my friends who

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**"The great strides we have made  
in economic development and in  
the improvement in the condition  
of our people has been, to some  
extent, negated by this  
population explosion."**

are sensible people and who have spent several years with me in my work understand that much we would all be safe". While driving this basic point home Gandhiji had a clear grasp of the reality of the situation and said "The fact is that Pakistan has invaded Kashmir. Indian troops have gone there as defenders at the express invitation of the Maharaja of the State and of Sheikh Abdullah who is the real leader of the Kashmir people. I shall advise Pakistan and India to sit together and decide the matter. If they are interested in a settlement what is the need for an arbitrator?".

**Gandhiji was against the intervention of a third party of a foreign hand as arbitrator.**

I recall these words to-day because they sum up the totality of the position our Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee took when

he travelled to Lahore this year and signed the Lahore Declaration with the Prime Minister of Pakistan. We adhere to the same friendly stand but, as we have been let down more than once in the past, it is prudent of us and it is our duty of our people to be prepared for any surprise attack on us. We have to act according to the old adage that eternal vigilance is the price of freedom as well as of peace.

### **Freedom Struggle**

As we celebrate our Independence to-morrow we recall in grateful remembrance the band of great and selfless men and women who led us in the struggle — Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Babu Rajendra Prasad,

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"I am glad to recognize the grass-root movements cropping up in different parts of our country for supervision of development programmes by the people for education, health, employment, etc."

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, Sarojini Naidu and the incomparable Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, and a host of others. We also recall the foot soldiers of that struggle, countless heroes and heroines who carried aloft the banner of *Swaraj*. Their aim was to free this ancient land so that millions of Indians sunk in poverty, disease and squalor would rise and live in dignity as free human beings. We have yet to redeem the pledge they gave to our people. One-third of our people still live below the poverty level, almost half of our adult population is illiterate, and more than half of our children are under-nourished. And withal our population is increasing at an alarming rate - it has been estimated that India's population would cross the one billion mark on the next Independence Day.

The great strides we have made in economic development and in the improvement in the condition of our people has been, to some extent, negated by this population explosion. We have to gather the political and social will to stem this tide, instead of frittering away our energies in the pursuit of the politics of power and pelf. Great causes cry out for our urgent attention.

The women of India have not yet come out of the long night of discrimination, inequality and denial of rights in which they have been living for ages. But it is gratifying to note that in different parts of India they have been rising and organising themselves in movements for self-employment and economic empowerment. They need political support. The struggle for

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the basic and minimum needs of our people for food, nutrition, health, education, drinking water and energy remain an unfinished business. The magnitude of these problems is so immense that if we do not address them as our overriding political, social and economic priorities, the galloping population would overwhelm us in the future. Against this background I am glad to recognize the grass-root movements cropping up in different parts of our country for supervision of development programmes by the people for education, health, employment, etc. for which Government has set apart large sums of money.

The Right to Information is one such grass-root movement which deserves wider popular and legislative support. Our natural environment and life sources such as air, water and land are to-day receiving greater attention than before, thanks to the efforts of citizens and NGO's. But I am afraid, by and large, we remain reckless consumers than preservers of these life-sources. It is time that we took conservation

and other environmental questions not as fashionable positions but as matters of life and death. No development will be sustainable or justifiable that ignores Nature and the human being.

On the 26th of November this year it will be 50 years since we adopted, enacted and gave to ourselves the Constitution of India. The Constitution is the sheet-anchor of our polity and it is my earnest hope that it would continue to be respected by all.

### **Science & Technology**

Science and technology, which occupy the centre-stage in our progress, is paying heed to the human dimensions of development. Thanks to the efforts put in during the first two or three decades India can to-day boast of a stabilized green revolution, a diversified industrial infrastructure, and a Science and Technology-base for our further development. While Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of "science solving the problem of hunger and poverty" in our country has not yet been fulfilled, we have been able to break the back of the

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**"Rolling back or putting a cap on the advancement of science is contrary to the very spirit and nature of science, and against the equitable world order that we are pledged to bring into being."**

demon of hunger by resort to science in our agriculture. Our progress in the development of satellites, atomic energy, information technology and biotechnology are not merely climbing the high peaks of Science and Technology, but are applying the techniques to grass-root problems and to the importance of patenting our diverse genetic riches before they are taken away by the advanced nations. India is bound to emerge as a major scientific-technological power in the new millennium. **Rolling back or putting a cap on the advancement of science is contrary to the very spirit and nature of science, and against the equitable world order that we are pledged to bring into being.**

#### **Elections**

Friends, in a few weeks from

now the people of India will be exercising their franchise to elect the 13th Lok Sabha and some of the State Assemblies. Our record of orderly elections, which form the basis of our democratic polity, is now acknowledged by the world. Indian voters have exercised their franchise and chosen their representatives with practical common sense; they have reposed confidence with generosity; withdrawn it without ambiguity; created, preserved and demolished mandates. No one dares take the Indian voter for granted. It is gratifying for us that to-day the world significance of Indian democracy has begun to dawn upon the developed democracies of the world. But still we must not forget that often in global power-politics the blood of strategic affinity is thicker than the life-giving waters of democracy.

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I would like to avail this opportunity to urge all contestants and campaigners in the coming polls to maintain our democracy's track record, to abjure appeals of a narrow sectarian nature and show a broad tolerance of opinions of others. I trust that the ugly phenomenon of voter-intimidation and booth-capturing which has marred voting in some pockets in the past, will not be tolerated anywhere on this occasion. The firmness shown in this regard by our Election Commission has been widely appreciated.

Our Election Commission, our Judiciary and other Constitutional authorities like the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, are institutions of which we are proud for their impartiality, objectivity and sense of responsibility.

Likewise, we derive great satisfaction from the functioning of the National Commissions that have been set up for the welfare of our minorities, women, scheduled castes and scheduled

tribes and other vulnerable sections of our society.

Fellow citizens and friends, on this last Independence Day of the century we have every reason to look forward to the new millennium with hope and self-assurance. Despite all the obstacles set in our path we are served by the strength of our democratic institutions and we draw sustenance from our rich heritage from the past and from the reawakened spirit of our people. In this spirit we send our greeting to our neighbours in South Asia - to Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives with whom we are engaged in the adventure of building up SAARC as a prosperous and viable regional entity. We also send our greetings to the friendly countries of ASEAN with whom we are closely associated. I am delighted that our relations with the People's Republic of China have improved. Next year will be the 50th anniversary of the People's Republic of China and of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China

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**"on this independence day let us resolve to imbue our lives with the spirit of that midnight hour when we made our tryst with destiny. May the tri-colour continue to inspire us and fulfil our destiny as a people and as a nation."**

and I would like to take this opportunity to send our warm greetings to that country in anticipation of those anniversary events. It is a matter of satisfaction to us that our relations with the countries of the sister continent of Africa, the Commonwealth of Nations; the European Union and the United States of America are marked by warmth and greater understanding.

From the inception of our independence India has been striving for a one-world that is free from the scourge of war and free of weapons of mass destruction. In the new century that is at our door step we pledge ourselves to persist with this effort. Towards this we would like to see the full potential and scope

of the United Nations Organization realized through wider representation and restructuring. We will continue to attach the greatest importance to the Non-Aligned Movement in the formation of which we take pride and which has played an important role in ending the nightmare of the Cold War and which we believe is of relevance in providing stability the balance to the pluralistic world order that is emerging.

Friends, on this independence day let us resolve to imbue our lives with the spirit of that midnight hour when we made our tryst with destiny. May the tri-colour continue to inspire us and fulfil our destiny as a people and as a nation.

Jai Hind

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# VALMIKI RAMAYANA

## Uttarakanda



प्रतिगृह्य तु धर्मेण भरद्वाजसुतां तदा ।  
प्रजान्वेषिकया बुद्ध्या श्रेयो ह्यस्य विचिन्तयन् ॥

*Pratigrihya Tu Dharmena Bhaaradwaajasutaam Tadaa  
Prajaanveshikayaa Buddhyaa Shreyo Hyasya Vichintayan*

He gladly married Bharadwaja's daughter according to Dharmic usage, being intent on having a son by her, foreseeing that he would be eminent by his qualities.

मुदा परमया युक्तो विश्रवा मुनिपुङ्गवः ।  
स तस्यां वीर्यसंपन्नमवत्यं परमाद्भुतम् ॥  
जनयामास धर्मज्ञः सर्वैर्ब्रह्मगुणैर्युतम् ।

*Mudaa Paramayaa Yuktto Vishravaa Munipungavah  
Sa Tasyaam Veeryasamapannamavatyam Paramaadbhutam  
Janayaamaasa Dharmajnah Sarvairbrahmagunai-r-yutam*

He begot on her a son possessed of marvellous power and all the qualities that a Brahmana should possess.

नाम तस्याकरोत् प्रीतः सार्धं देवर्षिभिस्तदा ।  
यस्माद्विश्रवसोऽपत्यं सादृश्याद्विश्रवाइव ।  
तस्माद्वैश्रवणो नाम भविष्यत्येष विश्रुतः ॥

*Naama Tasyaakarot Preetah Saardham Deva-r-rishibhistadaa  
Yasmaadvishravaso-apatyam Sadrushyaadvishravaaiva  
Tasmaadvaishravano Naama Bhavishyatesha Vishrutah*

Along with the celestial sages he bestowed on him the name Vaishravana, by which he would be famous in the days to come, since he was Vishravasa's son.

स तु वैश्रवणस्तत्र तपोवनगतस्तदा ।  
अवर्धताहुतिहुतो महातेजा यथानलः ॥

*Sa Tu Vaishravanastatra Tapovanagatastadaa  
Avardhataahutihuto Mahaatejaa Yathaanalah*

Vaishravana betook himself, to the penitential woods and rapidly advanced in austerities like the fire into which oblations are made.

तस्याश्रमपदस्थस्य बुद्धिर्जज्ञे महात्मनः ।  
चरिष्ये परमं धर्मं धर्मो हि परमा गतिः ॥

*Tasyaashrama Padasthasya Buddhi-r-jagne Mahaatmanah  
Charishye Paramam Dharmam Dharmo Hi Paramaa Gatih*

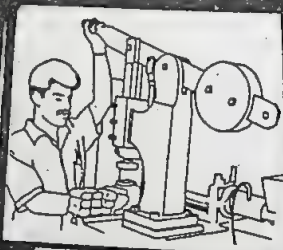
Living in the hermit settlement, the mighty one decided, 'I shall follow the Supreme Dharma, for Dharma is the highest goal.'

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# JARA YAAD KARO QURBANI

## ज़रा याद करो कुर्बानी...

India's territorial integrity is gravely threatened. At our very doors in Kashmir. And India's gallant sons like Sq. Ldr. Ajay Ahuja, Lt. Col. Vishwanathan, Capt. P.V. Vikram and Sgt. Raj Kishore Sahu have attained martyrdom in defending it.

Yes, we are all truly proud of them. And equally share in the tragedy and trauma that their near and dear ones have suffered. Their losses can never be fully compensated.

Meanwhile, let us do our duty.

Let us salute these brave sons of India.

Let us spare a thought for their families.

Let us stand by them in their dismal hour.

Let us give them all the moral support and some material help.

Let us share in their loss and show that we care for them.

Let us help them overcome their tragedy and trauma.

Let us contribute our mite.

Kindly, send in your contributions (cheques/drafts) in the name of 'Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, A/c. Shaheed Parivar Raksha Nidhi' to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Munshi Sadan, Kulapati K.M. Munshi Marg, Chowpatty, Mumbai - 400 007.

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# Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Shahid Parivar Raksha Nidhi

## V

Contribution received upto 16-7-1999		Rs. 33,14,637.94
545	Sri Mitesh Kamdev, Mumbai	3,16,000.00
545	Sri Mitesh Kamdev, Mumbai	3,16,000.00
546	Students & Staff, Bhavan's V.M. Public School, Baroda	2,09,986.00
547	Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram, Chennai	1,57,597.00
548	Bhavan's Vidyashram, Jaipur	1,11,089.00
549	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Calcutta Kendra	1,00,000.00
550	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Calicut Kendra	60,000.00
551	Bhavan's Public School (Vidyashram), Hyderabad	53,595.00
552	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Thiruvathapuram	30,751.00
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557	S.P.J.I., Mumbai	22,998.00
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563	Staff & Student Bhavan's Ambuja Vidya Niketan, Ambujanagar	13,400.00
564	Bhavan's Rajashree Vidya Mandir, Gulbarya	13,000.00
565	The Mylapore, Chennai	12,500.00

566	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram, Chennai	12,313.00
567	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Pune	11,500.00
568	Old Students Associates Bhavan's V.M. Public School, Baroda	11,000.00
569	Mohan Lal Jain & Sons, Meerut	11,000.00
570	Citizen of India	10,501.00
571	Manilal Balabhai Nanavati Charity Trust	10,000.00
572	Manu Enterprises	10,000.00
573	Mr. Devdutt Lall	10,000.00
574	Menaka Parthasarathy, Chennai	10,000.00
575	Wel-Wishers, Abu-Dhabi	7,643.00
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580	Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram, Chennai	5,500.00
581	Bhavan's Vikram Ispat Vidya Mandir, Salav	5,271.00
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590	Abhinov Exports	5,000.00
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608	Konica Industries	2,501.00
609	Bhavan's Lloyds Vidya Niketan, Warika	2,308.00
610	Sri S.K. Chatterjee, Mumbai	2,100.00
611	Sams Techno, Mumbai	2,001.00
612	Moldez Corp., Mumbai	2,001.00
613	Ebrahim Currim & Sons, Mumbai	2,001.00
614	Sri Jagdish Prasad Shukla, Mumbai	2,000.00
615	Sri Suresh M. Shah, Mumbai	2,000.00
616	Shilpan Dedhia, Mumbai	2,000.00
617	Mr. M.A. Irani, Mumbai	2,000.00
618	Smt. Shanti Sadiq Ali, New Delhi	2,000.00
619	Falguni Chokshi, Mumbai	2,000.00
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641	Glozex Sales Enterprises, Mumbai	1,100.00
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643	Rosana Tools, Mumbai	1,100.00
644	Meera Chaterjee, Mumbai	1,100.00
645	Sri Vinod J. Shah, Mumbai	1,001.00
646	Mrs. Maya V. Shah, Mumbai	1,001.00
647	Bhavana Industries, Mumbai	1,001.00
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657	Electromac Industries, Mumbai	1,001.00
658	Sonic Industries, Mumbai	1,001.00
659	Libratherni Instruments, Mumbai	1,001.00
660	M.M. Products, Mumbai	1,001.00
661	Mr. Ravindra Mehendale, Pune	1,001.00
662	Charmi Plastic, Mumbai	1,001.00
663	Akram Plastic, Mumbai	1,001.00

664	Medhavi Consultancy, Pune	1,000.00
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698	Sri Nitin J. Zaven, Mumbai	600.00
699	M & J International, Mumbai	552.00
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704	Fishburn Printing Ink, Mumbai	501.00
705	Gears & Gears, Mumbai	501.00
706	Om Engg. Industries, Mumbai	501.00
707	Bright Pharma Machinery, Mumbai	501.00
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710	Power Ace Engg. Co., Mumbai	501.00
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713	Mr. M.D. Jaradi, Mumbai	501.00
714	United Refrigeration Co., Mumbai	501.00
715	Sri Chotelal Vora, Mumbai	501.00
716	S.K. & Sons, Mumbai	501.00
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749	Mr. P.V.K. Raju, Dolly, Lukchmi, Pusthak Bharati, Tirupati	111.00
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751	Student of Bhavan's Gandhi Institute of Computer, Chennai	100.00
752	Mr. K.J. Jaykrishnan, Palakkad	100.00
753	Sri K.V. Sreekumar, Coimbatore	100.00
754	Sri Sheshadri Sharma, U.S.A.	\$ 75.00
755	Sri Mohan Raj, Tumkur	50.00
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757	Mr. Prasad Popur	\$ 20.00
758	Sri K. Pottabiraman, Chennai	20.00
759	Sri Bhawarlal B. Jain, Mumbai	11.00

**Contribution Received on 14-8-1999**

**Total Rs. 49,83,039.00**

**Voice  
of  
Freedom**

**LAKSHMINATH N BEZBARUA  
( 1868 - 1938 )**

Born at Ahatagmi in Assam, Bezbarua studied law in Calcutta and later, in partnership with others, established his timber business there.

A talented youth, he started his literary career through a journal, Fanaki, in 1889 and subsequently distinguished himself as an eminent literary figure by contributing to the reputed journals of his time.

Married to a descendant of the Tagore family, Bezbarua was influenced by Rabindranath, whose deep inspiration and seriousness of purpose prepared him to give a fillip to Assamese literature after years of stagnation it had suffered in the past. One of the principal architects of Assamese literature, he enriched it with essays, plays, fiction and poetry. A purposeful literary artist, Bezbarua closely associated himself with the Assamese society and successfully reflected it in his literary works.

Bezbarua's plays and poems are full of patriotic fervour and his style is a faithful and transparent reflection of his mind. He was the author of the Assamese national anthem, O, Mor Aponan Desh.

## Voice of Freedom

### BALWANTRAI MEHTA (1899-1965)



Balwantrai Mehta, whose birth centenary is being celebrated this year, was described by Mahatma Gandhi as the 'Second Sardar of Kathiawar'. He began his illustrious life of service and sacrifice to the country with voicing the aspirations of the people of the State of Bhavanagar and championing the cause of labour. He came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi early in the 20s and joined the fight for the democratisation of the Princely State Bhavanagar and other States of Saurashtra. He founded the Bhavanagar Praja Mandal and was on the editorial board of 'Saurashtra'. Later, he was the General Secretary of the All India States' People's conference and edited its organ 'States' People'. He became the Prime Minister of Bhavanagar in 1948, Deputy chief Minister of Saurashtra during 1948-52 and the Gujarat State Chief Minister in September 1963 till he died in a plane crash in 1965. Balwantrai Mehta made his mark as a parliamentarian and was Chairman of Estimates Committee which produced about 100 reports. He also headed the Board of Editors of the 'History of the Freedom Struggle in the Indian States'. He had a decisive role in inaugurating Panchayat Raj.

Born of Gopalji Tribhuvandas and Zaverben, on Feb 19, 1899, Balwantrai had his education in Bombay and Ahmedabad. He organised the Bhavanagar Railway Union and founded the Mahila Vidyalaya (in Bhavanagar) and the Thakkar Baba Harijan Ashram. He was in jail for about seven years (at different periods) during the freedom struggle. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly and was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1952. During the Indo-Pakistan conflict of 1965, his plane was shot down when he was on a visit to the Kutch border as Chief Minister of Gujarat. His wife, Sarojben, was with him in the ill-fated plane.

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# Dr. S. Radhakrishnan :

## Philosopher, Statesman, Sage

P.D. TANDON

**D**r. Radhakrishnan's 111th birthday falls on Sept 5, 1999, the day being observed as Teachers' Day. India's outstanding philosopher - statesman, Dr. Radhakrishnan, was President of India during 1962-67. Dr. Radhakrishnan was a Founder Member of the Bhavan and he took active interest in its activities.

**I**want to meet the professor who reads 24 hours a day," said Stalin when he expressed his desire to see Dr. Radhakrishnan at the Kremlin. The philosopher, by his ability and shrewdness, had created an atmosphere in Moscow which endeared him to the Soviet officials. If he succeeded admirably as our Ambassador in Moscow, it was because he knew, "how to function like an electric radiator exactly adjusted to the demands of the climate". This meeting made history and was the biggest

scoop of Dr. Radhakrishnan's diplomatic career.

Very few persons know that in the early years of his life Radhakrishnan was a very poor man. He used to eat his food on banana leaves and not in plate or Thali, as he could not afford to buy either. Once he did not have the money to buy even the banana leaves. That day he very carefully cleaned the floor, spread the food on it and ate it. His salary those days was about Rs.17 per month only and he had a big family to support. He had borrowed some money and could not pay even



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the interest on it. He had to auction his medals to meet his needs. This has been revealed by his own son, Dr. S. Gopal.

Some of Dr. Radhakrishnan's dicta and pronouncements have become famous because of their logic, brilliance and grandeur of language. His following remarks, for instance.

"Millennium is a time when all the heads will be hard, all the

pillows soft".

"We are taught to fly in the air like birds and swim in the water like fishes but how to live on earth like man we do not know".

"It takes centuries to make a little history, it takes centuries of history to make a tradition".

"Politics is never an art of obtaining political power. It is an essential branch of the art of promoting human welfare".

After World War II he wrote, "Peace is already lost during the winning of the war, since the same of men and same ideas and institutions that produced the catastrophe are to be allowed to dominate the peace table".

As long as you read the books of philosophers, you feel greatly impressed by them, but when you come in contact with them, you feel a little disillusioned. You find that they are visionaries and impractical men and live only in the realm of imagination, but away from the realities of life. But not so with Dr. Radhakrishnan. He was practical

---

and had insight into human nature. He was comfortable in the company of the learned, but had no contempt for those also who had been kept bereft of higher education. It was true that he did not feel very much at ease with all sorts of men and enjoyed only the company of those whom he knew intimately.

In this connection, CEM Joad has an interesting incident to narrate. "I shall not easily forget dining in company with Radhakrishnan at HC Wells' flat. Besides Wells and myself, there was only one other person present. J.N. Sullivan, the well-known writer on scientific subjects. The talk was continuous, and eager, it included science, philosophy, the state of the world, the possible collapse of the Western Civilization. Radhakrishnan was for the most part silent. He sat there refusing one after another the dishes of an elaborate meal, drinking only water, listening. We others, knowing his reputation as a speaker and conversationalist

were, I think, a little surprised at this silence, surprised and impressed not so much because what he did say was always to the point, but because his silence in such a discussion was a richer and more significant thing than any positive contribution he could have made".

CEM Joad had described Dr. Radhakrishnan as a liaison officer between the East and the West. By training and temperament, he was peculiarly well-equipped to reconcile the conflicts between the East and the West. Equally at home with Kant and Hegel, Shankaracharya and Ramakrishna Paramhansa, he was a citizen of the world. To the West he seemed to be a typical Western intellectual while the East regarded him as a sage, rishi, who symbolised the ancient wisdom of the Orient. Dr. Radhakrishnan wove spells not only in the lecture halls but also in drawing rooms. As a conversationalist, he was always thought-provoking and scintillating, but he refused to

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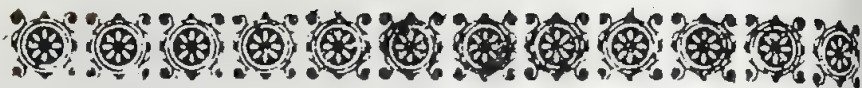
monopolise the conversation. He was as good a listener as a talker. Though words came to him in a torrent, he knew the value of silence - which in his case was more eloquent than the rhetoric of brilliant men.

An independent man, if ever there was one, Dr. Radhakrishnan did not hesitate to call a spade, a spade if the occasion demanded it. His spirit of independence found aggressive expression in a famous encounter he had in 1942 with the then Governor of U.P., Sir Maurice Hallett. Dr. Radhakrishnan, who had gone to Lucknow to protest against the closing of Banaras Hindu University, of which he was then the Vice-Chancellor, discovered in Sir Maurice an autocrat, who refused to listen to reason. The Governor lost his temper when the philosopher defended the students who had been punished for having participated in the struggle for freedom. Dr. Radhakrishnan rose to the occasion. In words burning with

indignation he gave a bit of his mind to the Governor. During the 20-minute exchange of hot words, Dr. Radhakrishnan forgot that his job was to lecture on Kant and Hegel. He had become the voice of Indian nationalism.

One of the most striking things about Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was his versatility. And very few in India can claim such a magnificent record of success as was his. His powerful mind, his power of speech, his command over the English language, his dedication to scholarship and his mental alacrity greatly contributed to his rare success in life. He had the wisdom of a sage, detachment of a philosopher, maturity of a statesman. Whatever in life he touched, he adorned. His ability to adopt himself to circumstances was remarkable. From place to place he wandered and "sparkled from position to position, making a career look like a holy evangel." A remarkable personality who at once impressed and inspired.



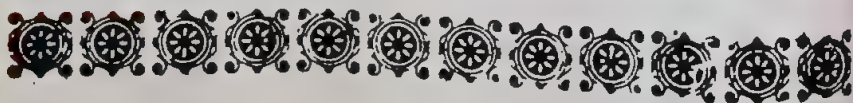


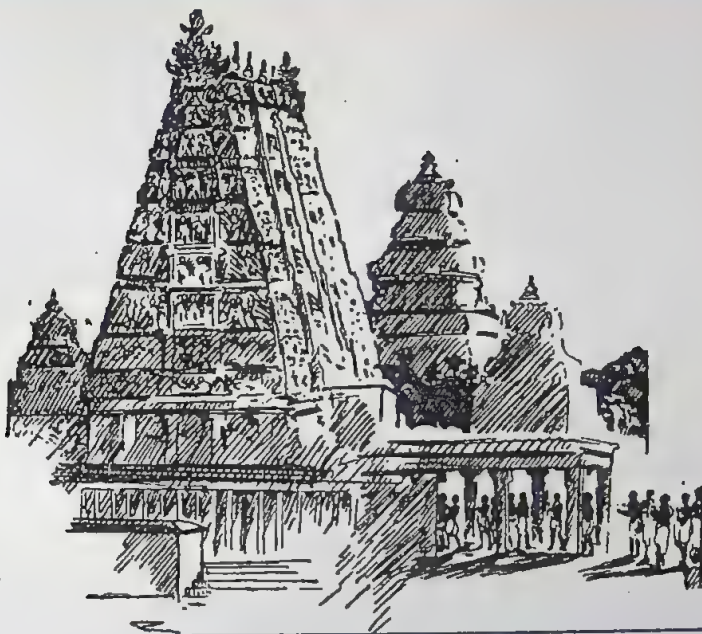
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**Epic Temple Entry  
Proclamation (1936)  
Accession of Travancore to  
the Indian Union (1947)**

**His Highness Marthanda Varma  
sheds new light.**

---

*In the Bhavan's Journal dated June 30, 1999, we carried a review of the book, "To Thata With Love: A Grand daughter's Reminiscences" by Shakuntala Jagannathan. His Highness Marthanda Varma, in his correspondence with us, sheds new light on the epic Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation and Accession of Travancore to the Indian Union.*

TB

Pattom Palace,  
Tiruvananthapuram 695 004,  
July 26, 1999.

My dear Sri Ramakrishnan,

I have just now received the copy of latest *Bhavan's Journal* dated the 30th of June and was very glad to see that it carries two projections about Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, a very dear friend from 1930 to the time that he left all of us. But I was also very pained and hurt in heart to read in both S. Narayanaswamy's and Sakunthala Jagannathan's contributions, distortions of facts. It is a pity that such misinformation should be voiced through such a prestigious publication as yours, the *Bhavan's Journal*. I quote "... even when he was carrying out a 100 per cent Gandhian programme, that of throwing open the temples of Travancore to the Harijans, he being the first to do so in India". I wish to emphasise TWO aspects in this regard. First : that he was the Dewan and not the Sovereign of the State and that while he could advise it was the RULER Alone who could enact the Proclamation which is an ACT OF STATE. While not denying his contribution in this magnificent step it is still erroneous to lay the action and praise at his door. Second : the Temple Entry Proclamation was in the year 1936. But in the year 1924 or so the Maharaja saw Mahatma Gandhiji who asked him, if when he became the Maharaja he would grant Temple Entry; the reply was a spontaneous YES! 1924 and 1936 are far apart and in the year 1924, Sir C.P.



**His Highness Sri Padmanabha  
Dasa Vanchi Pala  
Sri Rama Varma Maharajah  
of Travancore  
(In Temple Costume)**

Ramaswamy Aiyar was not anywhere on the scene.

Sakunthala Jagannathan, apart from implying that all the

good things that happened in Travancore were due only to her Grand Father; has underlined one glaring wrong angle to a fact of history. I quote : "Of special interest here, in the context of Smt. Shakunthala Jagannathan's book, is the general misconception that Dr. C.P. was responsible for Travancore's intransigence. She points out that Dr. C.P. handed over the Accession Agreement to the Maharaja on July 23, 1947. Unfortunately, the Maharaja sent his acceptance of accession to the Viceroy on the 28th of July by telegram and on the 30th by a letter". The time lag was just FIVE DAYS to accede to a Momentous decision in life and aspects of duty and it seems to be very harsh to label this as INTRANSIGENCE". I am sorry to have made this a long letter and do hope that you will kindly note that all I want to do is to PUT the RECORDS straight.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



· August 10, 1999

Your Revered Highness,

We have received your letter dated July 26, 1999, regarding the articles on Sir C.P. in *Bhavan's Journal* of June 30, 1999.

Undoubtedly, the Travancore Royal House, especially His Highness Padmanabhadasa Balarama Varma, was equally, if not more, responsible, along with Sir C.P. for the historic Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936.

It would be a revelation to many that His Highness had discussed the matter of Temple Entry with Gandhiji as early as 1924, twelve years prior to its Royal Proclamation. During 1924, Gandhiji's movements, after his release from the Yeravada Jail on February 5, 1924, were mostly confined to North India - Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Lahore, Rawalpindi. He reached Belgaum on December 20, 1924, to preside over the Congress session of December 26, 1924. He gave an interview to 'The Hindu' on the Vaikam Satyagraha in Mumbai on April 25, 1924. Vaikam figured in the discussions with the participants in Mumbai on May 15, 1924. It would be a valuable piece of information of historic significance if Your Highness can indicate as to where and when His Highness Sri Chithira Thirunal met Gandhiji.

We are sorry that the word 'intransigence' crept into our article.

We are taking the liberty of publishing your letter of July 26, 1999, in *Bhavan's Journal*. If your Highness will graciously favour us with the clarification, we would like to include that too.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

With reverential pranams,

Yours sincerely,

(S. Ramakrishnan)



TJL

Pattom Palace,  
Tiruvananthapuram 695 004,  
August 18, 1999.

My dear Sri Ramakrishnan,

Thank you for your letter of the 10th of August, 1999. Let me also thank you for seeing in the proper perspective matters about which I had written to you on the 26th of July.

With regard to your question about the meeting of Mahatma Gandhiji and my Brother; Travancore was under the Regency rule when Mahatmaji came here in 1924. He met Her Highness the Senior Maharani who was the Regent and then the Maharaja, my Brother who was then 12 years old in the Fort Palace in Tiruvananthapuram when Gandhiji asked him if he would give Temple Entry when he took over the reins of administration to which his reply was 'Yes'.

If you feel that my letter would serve a purpose, please do publish it.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

*Parthasarathi Venu*

---

# **An Example for Hindu Princes And Their Advisers**

— M. K. Gandhi

The Travancore Durbar have earned the congratulations of the whole Hindu world, and all thoughtful men, by issuing the following Proclamation:

"Profoundly convinced of the truth and validity of our religion, believing that it is based on divine guidance and on all-comprehending toleration, knowing that in its practice it has throughout the centuries adapted itself to the need of the changing times, solicitous that none of our Hindu subjects should, by reason of birth, caste or community, be denied the consolation and solace of the Hindu faith, we have decided and hereby declare, ordain and command that, subject to

**"I verily believe that when all else about  
Travancore is forgotten, this one act of the  
Maharajah - the Proclamation- will be  
remembered by future generations with gratitude."**

— M. K. Gandhi

such rules and conditions as may be laid down and imposed by us for preserving their proper atmosphere and maintaining their rituals and observances, there should henceforth be no restriction placed on any Hindu by birth or religion on entering or worshipping at temples controlled by us and our Government".

Indeed I had the privilege of meeting the Maharani and her young hope, the present Maharajah, when I was in Travancore years ago. The Maharani had even then professed her belief in the reform. I had even jokingly asked the boy, as the Maharajah then was, whether he would remove untouchability and throw open temples when he mounted the gadi of Travancore. He had enthusiastically said, 'Of course'. Have I not known Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer since 1915 or 1916 as a reformer ?.....

21.11.36

[From The Epic of Travancore by Mahadev Desai]

ॐ श्री महागणपतये नमः



॥ वक्रतुंड महाकाय सूर्यकोटि समप्रभ ॥  
॥ निर्विघ्नं कुरु मे देव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा ॥

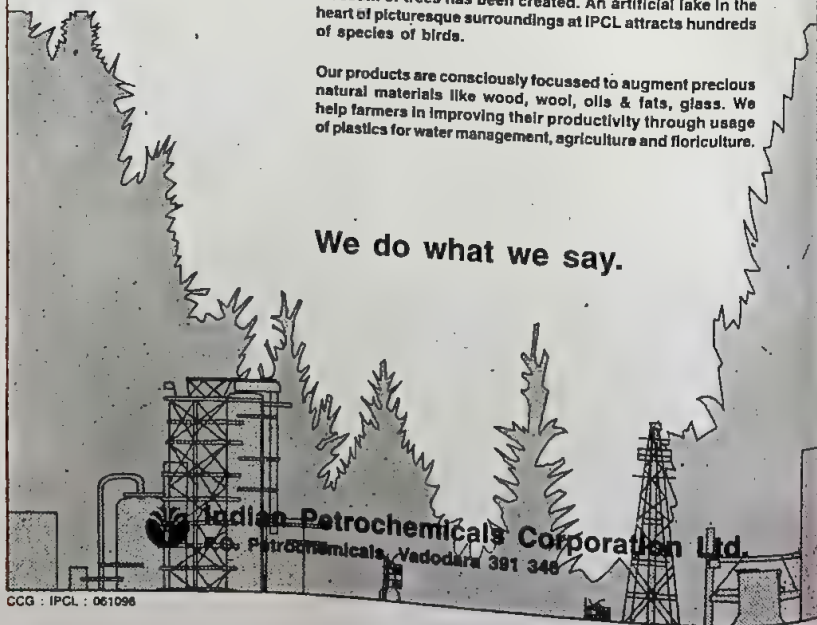
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No ceremonies commence without propitiating  
the Elephant-God

**A**WESOME indeed is the variety in concept and visualisation of Divinity which is amply evident in the vast and ancient heart of Hinduism, to suit the emotional thirst and spiritual need of man. From the immensity of the 'Sahasra seersha Purusha', the Thousand-headed one, to the humbleness of a Tulasi leaf, the

swing of the celestial graph is wondrous indeed. Yet even amidst this pantheon of Gods, the most inevitable to the body of orthodox Hindu worship is Sree Ganapati



*\*The author is the Princess of Travancore*

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Bhagavan. No ceremonies commence without propitiating the Elephant-God for He is 'Vighneswara', the remover of all obstacles. He is also the fountain-head of wisdom but that aspect, though admittedly consequential, seems to take the second seat in utilisation, with His prowess at smoothing the way to success gaining the upper hand.

His paramount position in the

our ancient seers as, by this salutation, homage is paid to the entire Sanskrit alphabet in its compressed form, resorting to the principles of numerology. Accordingly, 'Hari' is equal to 28, Sree = 2, Ga = 3, Na = 5, Pa = 1, Tha = 6, Ye = 1, Na = 0 and Ma = 5 reaching a total of 51. And the alphabet is "Ambathonnaksharali" comprising 51 letters. He is also



sphere of knowledge, however, cannot be underestimated. Every Hindu Malayalee child starts the first letters with this invocation to Him 'Hari Sree Ganapataye Namah'. These words also possess the concealed brilliance of

the most accomplished amanuensis (copyist) among the Devas and (He) is of Mahabharata fame as the invincible scribe to Sree Veda Vyasa Bhagavan.

Ganapati enjoys privileges

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special to Him which project His stand in the divine panorama. He is the unquestioned initial receiver of worship before the start of Pujas or Vedic ceremonies. In this context, a unique factor surfaces. Even if it is 'Saparivaara Puja' for Ganapati, it is still mandatory that a separate one be performed for Him, such a status is not accorded to any other Deity.

Moreover each of the 'Muppathumukkoti or 33 crore Devas is seen with a separate Ganapati potency within.

In the cosmic system Ganapati represents 'Bhoomi Tattva' which is one of the five basic elemental concepts of the 'Panchabhootas'. In the human system He is positioned at the 'Moolaadhara' or base of the spine from where the mighty 'Kundalini Sakti' starts to spiral up. While equated to a super computer with His physical representation giving the picture of a somewhat stylised **Pranavam**, in the general system, He is in His gross form (sthoolam) and in the individual

system, He is in His super-refined form (sookshmam).

The ancient texts tell us that there are over 84 lakh types of life or 'Jeevaraashies'. In the animal kingdom the first entry is believed to have been the elephant. Kapila Muni in his 'Saankhya Yogam' states that some part, however infinitesimal, of all living beings

is found within the massive frame of the elephant.

As such, in a wider sense it represents mobile creation itself. Ganapati, the Elephant-God, is creation, at the same time, its master-controller too.

His perceivable form thus claims a natural prominence. One of the reasons why the elephant is commonly favoured for carrying the deities in processions is this.

Puranically, Ganapati arrived subsequent to the major Deities like Vishnu, Siva etc. presenting different versions relating to His origin. The view that there is little evidence of Ganapati Puja in Kerala till the 17th Century stands contradicted by the claim that



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during the period of the Kulasekharas, Ganapati was given importance and was the recipient of worship. The ambiguity encircling the time-span has to be taken into account when counter claims of earlier ages are raised since the Kulasekharas have a vast operational frame of ages. According to Prof. C. Bhatt, in his 'Studies of Tulwa History & Culture', Ganapati worship in image form emerged with the 5th century. Yet, while tracing the evolutionary pattern, worship of birds and animals appears older in origin than idols. In this Age of Kali, along with Durga and Sasta, Ganapati is deemed to be ideal for worship by all. This could be because by nature He is easily propitiated (kshipraprasaadi) the elaborate rituals like Maha Ganapati Homa with over thousand coconuts as well as, homage with Karaka grass please Him equally when offered with devotion. Nor is He particular about the medium into



which He is invoked whether it be gold or a lump of cowdung, emphasising His essential nature of omnipresence.

Gaanapatyam is one of the six major systems of worship and the others are : Vaishnavam, Saivam, Shakteyam, Sauram and Skandam.

Innumerable are the concepts of this Elephant-God, opinion varying from 108 to 160. Maha Ganapati, Karpoor Ganapati, Moola Ganapati, Siddhi Vinayaka, Pillaiyar Ganapati, Manjal (turmeric) Ganapati,

Uchishta and Vasya Ganapati (who are interrelated in concept), Yatra Ganapati, Agrashala Ganapati, Bala Ganapati, Nritha Ganapati, so the list goes on. There is Ganapati in female form as well as Vinayaki though this concept is rare. However, in orthodox ritualistic worship, sixteen identified aspects normally appear. He is also in possession of His own special Gayatri Mantra known as 'Ganapati Gayatri'.

In startling contrast to His gigantic form stands His vehicle (vaahana) the little mouse. This choice did not emerge as a result of some fleeting fancy but was intentional. Hinduism in itself is a perfect illustration of harmonisation of diversities, this being a fine example to the point. Moreover the intrinsic tendency of the mouse to ferret out and burrow which is interpreted as the urge to delve deep in search of enlightenment, making it complement ideally with the Master who is Himself enlightenment.

The term 'Ganapati' vibrates with Beejaksharas. 'Ganam' or 'Kanam' approximately translates as atom through the action of which the 'Apancheekritha Panchaboota Shareesam' or unformative pre-particle state gets transformed into the 'Pancheekritha' or formative state. The power that brings about the fusion of the atom and atom (Ganam and Ganam) is interpreted as the qualifying nature of the earth. And this mighty God is the 'Pati' or Supreme Lord of the 'Ganas'; He is indeed Ganapati. □

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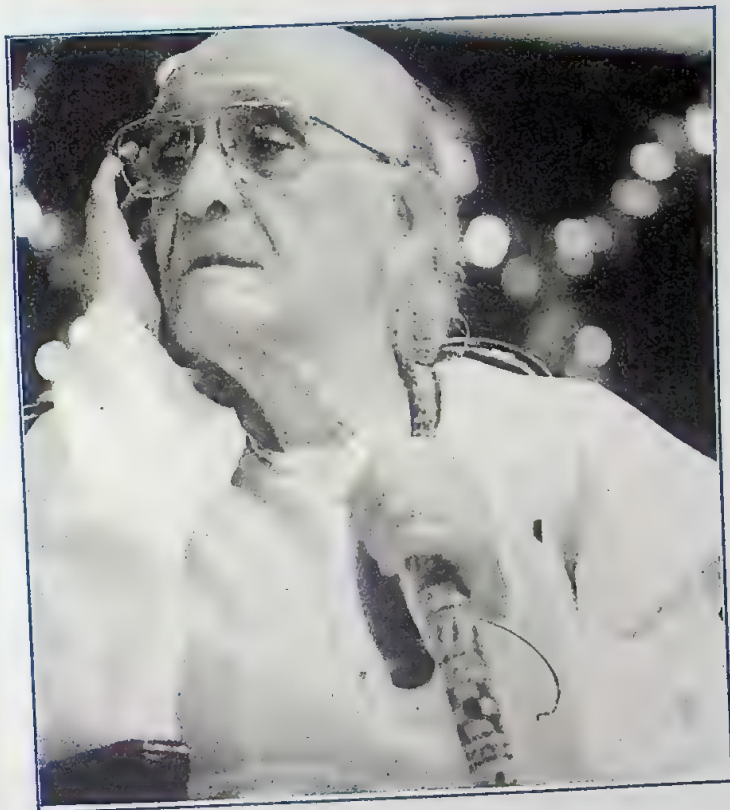
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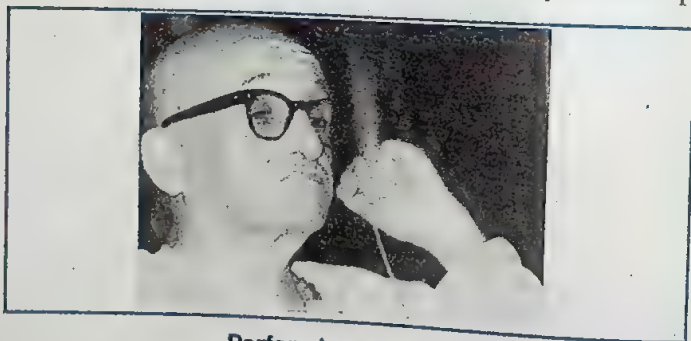
# What Life Has Taught Me

SANGITA KALANIDHI  
SEMMANGUDI SRINIVASA IYER

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**W**HETHER as a creative artiste or as a unique interpreter of the great composers or as a contended patriarch, Semmangudi Srinisasa Iyer is a great role model. The abundant grace of his music is the outward expression of an inner harmony achieved through sadana of a rare kind. Talent for improvisation, devotion, classicism, creativity of a disciplined



Performing Rama Japa

sort and absence of self-indulgence are the high points of his excellence. It is also true that no musician has worked harder or more steadily in pursuit of success as well as the higher ideals that should inspire and guide any Carnatic musician who wants to leave his foot-prints on the sands of time.

A life of great fruition, a life of unique service in cause of music, a yogi at heart and with utter simplicity in his daily life has recounted here what life has taught him.

**M**Y readers, perhaps, know what life has taught me —

Music. I would like to say in this article how and from whom I learnt it. I would also like to say what other things I learnt besides music.

I was born on July 25, 1908 in the house of my maternal uncle, Shri Thirukkodikaval Krishna Iyer, a violin maestro. At the age of five, I was initiated into writing the alphabet on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dasami, after being helped to write and read "Om Namo Narayana" on a palm leaf.

We were residing at Semmangudi (situated between Tiruvarur and Kudavasal in Thanjavur District of Tamil Nadu) and there was no school there in those days. So, after my 'Upanayanam', at the age of eight,

I began to learn music under the guidance of my cousin, Violin Vidwan Semmangudi Shri Narayanaswamy Iyer.

Later from 1918 to 1921, I learnt vocal music from Gottuvadyam Vidwan Shri Sakharama Rao of Thiruvidadaimaruthur. He showered love on me as he would

do on his own son. At that time Devakottai Shri Narayana Iyengar was also learning music under Shri Sakharama Rao.



Life has taught me Music

### My Guru

My guru was a man of deep devotion and piety. Whenever he was in financial

difficulty, he used to go to the temple of Sri Mahalingaswamy and light lamps praying to the deity. Soon, providentially, someone would come and fix him up for a musical concert.

## Many Moods of Semmengudi



He was a great devotee of Lord Dattatreya. During the month of Margazhi (December-January) he would bathe in Kavery river early in the morning and return home singing devotional songs (Abhangs) along the streets. This scene would remind the onlookers of Sant Tukaram. For his music performances, his brother Shri Hari Rao used to play on the violin. Because he was very particular about Laya he did not keep any other accompaniments.

During the 'guru-kula' days, I used to attend many music concerts at temple festivals. In those days there used to be

nagaswaram recitals from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m., with importance given to elaborate **raga alapana**. Later, it was Thiruppambaram brothers who pioneered the singing of Kirtans. I can also say with **certainty** that it is the **nagaswaram** which promoted the growth and development of **raga music**.

During those days we students used to vie with one another to do service to our guru, such as washing his clothes and watering plants at his residence.

I consider those days of my studentship as the golden period of my life. Despite his scholarship and eminence, my guru was a



simple person. Let me give just one instance. Once at the Skanda Shashti festival at Tiruvidaimaruthur, Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer made an elaborate **alapana** of Bhairavi Raga. After listening to it, my guru straightaway prostrated before Shri Vaidyanatha Iyer and praised him saying, "Your Bhairavi has completely overwhelmed me". So simple was he.

### First Lesson

That incident taught me that one should unreservedly appreciate scholarship and skill whosoever possesses it. When I recollect

such instances, I feel thrilled. Once Shri Keevalur Ramachandra Bhagavata met me. He blessed me and said that I would have a bright future as a musician. I consider that it is because of the blessings of such good souls that I could gain mastery in music and make a name.

Later, when my brother Semmangudi Shri Narayanaswamy Iyer moved to Kumbhakonam to do business in Khadi clothes, I followed him to learn music under him. Subsequently, I learnt music under Shri Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer from 1925 to

1928. His son Santhanam was born during that period. He (Santhanam) virtually grew up on my lap. Shri Viswanatha Iyer was so noble minded that he used to introduce me to the people who gathered for his concerts and arrange for my performances, too.

### **My Debut**

My debut was in the year 1927, at Nageswaraswami Temple in Kumbhakonam, when I was nineteen. Later, in Chennai under the auspices of Indian National Congress, I performed for one hour in the morning (After my performance, Shri Madurai Mani Iyer sang).

In 1928, Shri Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar kindly arranged for my concert at his native village in Kerala. In the same year, I had the good luck to sing at Thiruvaiyaru. Then I got many opportunities to give music concerts. I learnt many **kirtanas** from Shri Umayalpuram Swaminatha Iyer who was in the direct lineage of Saint Tyagaraja.

Usually for my concerts, Kumbhakonam Rajamanikkam Pillai used to give accompaniment

on the violin and Umayalpuram Kothandarama Iyer on the mridamgam (later on ghatam). I am glad to say that by giving encouragement, they were instrumental in raising me to the status in which I am today. Palakkad Mani Iyer, Dakshina moorthy Pillai, Azhaganambi Pillai and Pazhani Subramania Pillai have given percussion support for my performances.

### **Asthana Vidwan**

In 1939, my concert was arranged on the occasion of the 'Upanayanam' ceremony of the Prince of Travancore. I was made the Asthana Vidwan of Travancore State in 1939. In 1941 I was offered the principalship of Swathi Thirunal Music College. (Now renamed Swathi Thirunal Academy). When I conveyed this information to Poojya Sri Mahaswami of Kanchi (H.H. Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati), he blessed me and advised me saying, "Go and render this service". Thereafter, I accepted the offer.

At that time, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Iyer was the Dewan

## A lesson in compassion

I would like to narrate here one unforgettable episode, which has left an indelible impression on my mind.

In the Ananthapadmanabhaswamy Temple at Thiruvananthapuram, Laksha Deepa Festival (a festival of lights) used to be celebrated once in six years. Huge thatched sheds used to be put up on the open space inside the temple premises, and elephants were used to lift heavy wooden logs (pillars) and put them in the deep pits dug for the purpose. As they were trained for this purpose, the elephants used to do an excellent job of it.

Once an elephant, Chandrasekharan by name, lifted and brought a huge log, hesitated to plant it in the pit. The mahout's repeated goadings and other efforts were of no avail. Not knowing the reason, and tired of intimidating the animal, the mahout and others peeped into the pit. Lo! to their surprise, they found a cat lying inside. They immediately took the timid cat out of the pit, whereupon the elephant planted the log perfectly into the pit. I can never forget this compassion shown by the elephant towards that little creature.

It is from that pachyderm that I learnt the virtue of compassion and mercy and have tried to practise it in my life.

of Travancore. He encouraged me and even permitted me to give outstation performances. The Maharaja of Travancore and his mother arranged for my concerts along with Shri Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyenger. We used to sing even without the **tampura**. I learnt a lot from Shri Iyenger.

I was in Thiruvananthapuram for 23 years, serving as Principal of the Music College. During those years in collaboration with Shri Muthiah Bhagavathar, I published in book form 101 **kritis** of Maharaja Swathi Tirunal. This appeared in "The Swadesamithran".

Once I accepted an invitation for giving a





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concert in Sri Lanka, but my father forbade my going abroad (crossing the sea was in those days a taboo). I had to drop the plan and give up once for all my desire to cross the sea. Though I could not go abroad, some of my friends from North America came here and honoured me with titles at the Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai.

I served All India Radio, Madras, for three years (1957-1960). I am glad to say that Vidwans of three generations have given me instrumental support in my concerts.

### **Tribute to Parents**

Before I end this article, I would like to say a few words about my parents. My venerable father used to chant Gayatri Mantra 1008 times every day. He passed away in 1940.

As I was born after my father had installed, at his expense, a 'Vigraha' (icon) at the Perumal Temple in our native place, Semmangudi, I was named Srinivasa as a token of gratitude to the Lord.

In memory of my father, I have

arranged daily pujas in the morning in that temple, and as per my mother's desire, I have arranged for the conduct of pujas in the Tamil month of Margazhi (December-January) at the temple of Lord Siva in our place. I feel grateful that the Almighty has been gracious enough to use me as an instrument - **nimitta matram** for the successful conduct of the Kumbhabhishekam in the two temples.

As mentioned earlier, there was no school in my village for a long time, and hence I was denied schooling. This made me approach Shri C. Subramaniam about 45 years ago (when he was Education and Finance Minister in the Government of Madras under Rajaji's Chief Ministership) for the opening of a school. He was good enough to readily agree and to grant what I asked for. I need hardly say to the readers of 'Bhavan's Journal' that Rajaji, reputed as the "Conscience keeper" of Mahatma Gandhi, was not only an ardent patriot and scholar but a very able administrator. He is the first and

**It is this God-given Satsanga  
which "taught" me to be  
good and to do good, to be  
humble and compassionate,  
and to be indifferent to  
praise and calumny.**

possibly the only Chief Minister, I think, who entrusted the portfolios of Education and Finance to one minister to ensure adequate financial allotment for education. The school started with 16 students. It has now grown into a high school. I am very happy about this development.

I must not fail here to say something about Shri Musiri Subramania Iyer, who guided me on many matters. He was so good as to perform concerts on my behalf whenever I was unable to do. Further, he was so noble as to tell me that it was enough if he was paid what was fixed for me (though it was small for his standing).

By God's grace, I have performed all over the country and received titles and awards

from many  
Maharajas and  
Governments.

I must, in the end,  
thank whole-  
heartedly the  
Almighty who  
blessed me with the  
**Satsanga** of many  
godly and good

people. It is this God-given **Satsanga** which "taught" me to be good and to do good, to be humble and compassionate, to avoid resorting to double-think and double-talk, and to be indifferent to praise and calumny. With all my limitations, it has been my endeavour to live up to these great ideals of our age-old religion and culture. It is my constant prayer to God Almighty to bless me with the moral strength to resist the allurements and temptations that may crop up from time to time.



**Voice  
of  
Freedom**

**KANTIPRASAD  
CHANDRASHANKER ANTANI  
(B.1902)**

K.C. Antani played a notable role in the development of Kutch in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat. At the call of the Congress which was leading the freedom struggle, Antani cut short his school studies in 1919, when he was barely 17. He represented Kutch at the Congress sessions and was a member of the Gujarat Congress Committee for several years. When Mahatma Gandhi toured Kutch in 1926, accompanied by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, he headed the reception committee. He organised the Kutchi Prajakiya Prishad for voicing the demands of the people for democratisation of Government. Later, he was nominated as a member of the Advisory Council of the Chief Commissioner for the Kutch. For campaigning against untouchability, he was ostracised by the Nagar Community. He was the Secretary of the local Harijan Sevak Sangh. He was associated with the Committee set up to draft a Constitution for Kutch. He took great interest in the constitution and working of local bodies.

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**Voice  
of  
Freedom**

**ABDUL QAIYYUM ANSARI  
(B.1905)**

Abdul Qaiyyum Ansari was drawn into the freedom struggle during the Khilafat agitation of 1918-20. He was associated with the Congress in different capacities at various levels. He was President of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee during 1959-63 and a member of the All India Congress Committee during the same period.

Ansari's main efforts were directed towards the uplift of the Momins, one of the backward sections of the Muslims. He was closely associated with the Momin Conference. He was the Vice-president of the All India Backward Classes Federation in 1954.

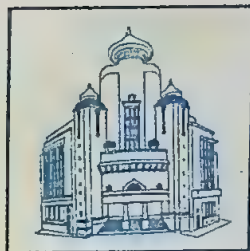
Ansari was a member of the Constituent Assembly, representing Bihar. He was elected to the Bihar Legislative Assembly first in 1946 and later in the general elections of 1952, 1962 and 1967. He was a member of the Backward Classes Commission set up by the Government of India in 1953-55. He held ministerial posts in Bihar during 1946-52, 1955-57 and 1962-67. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in March, 1970.

Ansari came from a respectable family of Dehri in Shahabad District of Bihar. Born on July 1, 1905, he had his education at the Universities of Aligarh, Allahabad and Calcutta. But his studies were interrupted by his participation in politics.

Ansari had literary interests. He edited a Urdu monthly called 'Tahzib' (1952-54). He was a Fellow of the Senate of Patna University during 1940-51.

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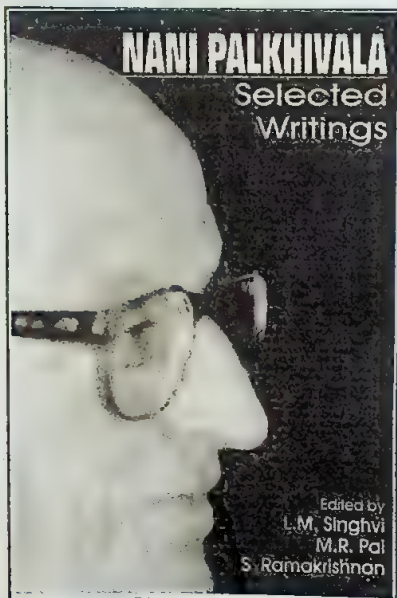
From the forthcoming 80th Birthday Commemoration Volume entitled 'Palkhivala Selected Writings' a joint publication of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Penguin Books India (P) Ltd.



**Nani Palkhivala  
Selected  
Writings**

Edited by  
**L.M. Singhvi  
M.R. Pai  
S. Ramakrishnan**

**Are We Masters  
of Our Fate?**



**O**N the subject of destiny, everyone of us forms his own beliefs on the basis of his own experiences. All that I propose to do is to tell you a few incidents in my own life. You are welcome to draw your own conclusions. I request you to keep an open mind and decide, without bias or prejudice, what you think are the right conclusions to be drawn.

Perhaps the key sentence to the whole problem was that of Dr. Johnson who is quoted in *The*

*Oxford Book of the Supernatural* - 'All argument is against it, but all belief is for it'.

It is erroneous to think that a nation or an individual that believes in fate is necessarily backward. The Germans have begun to believe in growing numbers in the occult and the supernatural. The French radio gives the day's horoscope along with the daily weather forecast, and France is home to 10,000 taxpaying clairvoyants. Astrology has claimed reinstatement at the Sorbonne after having been banished in 1666 under the influence of Descartes.

Some of the greatest men who have ever lived, have believed that certain events in their lives were preordained and that certain individuals had the rare gift of precognition.

An example which comes straight to mind is that of Dr. Radhakrishnan who was merely a professor of philosophy years before he became the Vice-President, and later the President of India. If you read the life of Dr. Radhakrishnan by his son Gopal, you will come across the

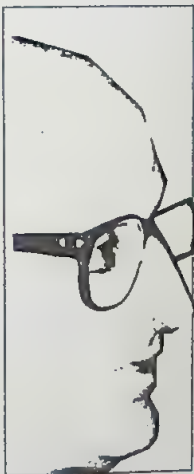
following passage :

‘Sometime during these years when Radhakrishnan was spending the summers in Europe, he met "Cheiro", the best known palmist of his day. "Cheiro" studies Radhakrishnan's palms and forecast that he would reach the top, be the head of a state, but would, before his death, lose his mind. Both these prophecies seemed at the time so wildly off the mark that they became a family joke'. (p.143)

The above passage bears eloquent testimony to two facts - preordination and the gift of precognition by rare individuals.

The voice of destiny has

spoken in the past to some of the greatest thinkers and saints who have flourished down the decades. In the *Times* (of London) of 5 July 1993, William Rees-Mogg in a very perceptive article bewails



that the inner guide that showed mankind the way forward has fallen strangely silent and quotes a few examples. Speaking of the ‘unknown guest’, Maurice Maeterlinck said, ‘From the darkest corners of our ego it directs our veritable life, the one that is not to die, and pays no heed to our thought or to anything

emanating from our reason’. Plato quotes Socrates as saying, ‘In the past the prophetic voice to which

**‘In the past the prophetic voice to which we have become accustomed has always been my constant companion, opposing me even in quite trivial things if I was going to take the wrong course’.**

**--- Socrates**



we have become accustomed has always been my constant companion, opposing me even in quite trivial things if I was going to take the wrong course'.

One of the most famous incidents of that type in our times is that of Winston Churchill who had a lucky escape from a bomb attack in a car. On that day he happened to choose to sit on the far side from his usual place. Lady Churchill asked him why. 'I do not know I do not know' he replied. Then he said, 'Of course I know. Something said to me "Stop" before I reached the car door which was held open for me. It then seemed to me that I was told I should open the door on the other side and get in and sit there'. Needless to add, Churchill escaped unhurt.

Let me quote one more

example of the 'unknown guest' whose guidance can change your life. In 1946, when Mother Teresa was thirty-six, she was no more than a teaching nun in India. On 10 September 1946 when she was on a train ride to Darjeeling, she felt the touch of a divine command—the message that she must quit her cloistered existence and plunge into Calcutta's slums to care for the poorest of the poor. Two years later, with permission from Rome, she left the convent with only five rupees in her pocket.

Then she applied for and got permission from the Pope to start her own order in 1950 — The Society of the Missionaries of Charity. She never looked back after the divine guidance was given to her by her 'unknown guest'. She has had no difficulty in collecting funds for the countless homes started by the Missionaries of Charity. In her own words, 'Donation is a big word. I like to call it Sharing. Like the four-year-old Hindu child who gave up sugar for three days and gave it for our work. That is real sharing'.

As Malcolm Muggeridge says



in his autobiography.

'In all the larger shaping of a life, there is a plan already, into which one has no choice but to fit'.

On the subject of destiny, let me state what I

believe as briefly as possible.

First, I believe that the basic pattern of an individual's or a nation's life is predetermined.

Secondly, very few individuals

have the gift of clairvoyance to foresee what is predetermined.

Thirdly, guidance is sometimes vouchsafed to receptive human beings by means for which there is not scientific explanation.

Fourthly, I do believe in the existence of free will but that again is within preordained parameters. To my mind, the simplest analogy to the case we are talking about is that of a dog on a long leash — the dog has the freedom to move about as far as the leash permits, but not beyond.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru expressed the same idea in more felicitous language. He was

***Nani Palkhivala addressing a large gathering at one of his budget lectures at the Brabourne Stadium, Mumbai.***





interviewed by Norman Cousins, the doyen of American editors, and a writer of high repute. After dealing with the political questions, Cousins put the last questions somewhat as

follows :

'You have a modern mind as a result of your upbringing in England, while your roots are in this ancient land. How do you reconcile free will and destiny?'

After pausing and pondering over the questions, Pandit Nehru replied as follows :

'Both have a place in our life. The best analogy one can think of is to compare life with a game of bridge. The cards dealt to you are out of your control, but the way you play your hand is your free will. Given a good hand, you can still mess up the game, and vice versa'.

There have been examples of

other men who have been humble enough to admit that they had reached certain positions in life not because they deserved them but because they were destined to attain them.

A typical example of this is the following conversation between our former Prime Minister, Sri Deve Gowda, and the correspondent of *India Today*, which appeared in the issue of 15 February 1997 :

*India Today* : Will your government last its full term?

*Sri Deve Gowda* : I never aspired to be prime minister. Destiny dragged me here. I don't know how long I will continue. But I do know that the design of destiny cannot be altered. Even in the given atmosphere I will run this government for a full term.

I come now to the experiences in my life on which I have based the four beliefs which I have just enumerated.

Upon joining the Bar in 1944, I started reading Briefs, and I kept on reading past Diwalis, past Christmases, past Ramzan Ids. past long vacations - like the Rajdhani Express speeding past



r a i l w a y  
stations. I  
believe that the  
journey will be  
over at the  
predestined  
h o u r ,  
irrespective of  
the medical  
care that  
money can buy.

I was  
engaged to  
argue a Special

Leave Petition which was to be heard in the Supreme Court on 9 May 1953. Chandrakant Mehta, a partner of Gagrut & Company, was the instructing attorney. We booked our return tickets from Delhi to Bombay by the night flight on the same day. On 6 May, I developed a very bad cold with fever and had to return the Brief. The next day I agreed to change my mind and do the case since it meant a lot to a poor and deserving litigant. But on 8 May my temperature rose higher and I had no option but to return the Brief once again. Mr. C.K. Daphtary, the Solicitor-General, who lived in Delhi was gracious

enough to agree to step into my place. Since I did not go to Delhi, Chandrakant Mehta, who disliked flying by night, went to the airline office and changed his own return ticket to the morning flight on 10 May. The plane, which left Delhi on the late evening of 9 May with a full passenger load, crashed. The father of Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, the well-known columnist who writes for the *Indian Express*, was one of those who died in the crash. There were no survivors.

Nani Palkhivala with his wife  
Nargesh





As a child I suffered from a dreadful stammer. It seemed that I had as much chance of becoming an advocate or a public speaker as a victim of multiple sclerosis has of becoming an

Olympic athlete. With the recklessness characteristic of a child, I ventured to take part in elocution competitions; but I believe that without providential grace my own will to get over the handicap would have been in vain.

At certain turning points in my life, when I would have made wrong decisions with my limited intelligence, I have felt as if my will was perceptible bent by some Higher Power which saved me from myself.

'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

Rough-hew them how we will'.

In 1968, Mr. Govinda Menon was the law minister in the

Congress government. He pressed me hard to accept the office of the Attorney-General of India. After a great deal of hesitation I agreed. When I was in Delhi I conveyed my acceptance to him, and he told me that the announcement would be made the next day. I was happy that the agonizing hours of indecision were over. Sound sleep is one of the blessings I have always enjoyed. That night I went to bed and looked forward to my usual quota of deep slumber. But suddenly and inexplicably, I became wide awake at three o'clock in the morning with the clear conviction, floating like a hook through my consciousness, that my decision was erroneous and that I should reverse it before it was too late. Early in the morning I profusely apologized to the law minister for changing my mind. In the years immediately following, it was my privilege to argue on behalf of the citizen under the same Congress government and against the government, the major cases which have shaped and moulded the constitutional law of India: Bank Nationalization (1969),



On 26 June 1975 the Emergency was proclaimed. After that I went through a period which was the darkest period of my life. Nothing happened to me personally but I was deeply distressed about the future of our democracy.

Privy Purse (1970), Fundamental Rights (1972-73) and the *Minerva Mills* case (1980), among others. Thus, the most momentous decision of my life was made by a Force other than myself.

On 26 June 1975 the Emergency was proclaimed. After that I went through a period which was the darkest period of my life. Nothing happened to me personally but I was deeply distressed about the future of our democracy. There was an employee of ACC whose surname was Thacker. I hope and trust he is still alive. He had a gift for sometimes seeing into the

future. I remember my friend, Wadud Khan, who at that time was the chairman of SAIL, telling me that he was thunderstruck by Thacker predicting that Wadud Khan's brother who was in the USA would die in a plane crash. Unfortunately, the brother of Wadud Khan did die in a plane crash. So, naturally, I was keen to speak to Thacker and ask him what he thought the future held in store for me.

One morning in 1976 I invited Thacker for a quiet chat at my residence. Predicting the future, he said to me, 'I see you occupying a beautiful, spacious mansion in Rome'. I told him that



I was not interested in being comfortable abroad but I would like to do what I could for my own people. He continued, 'You will stay there for about two years though you will have a number of opportunities to come back to India'. I put the incident out of my mind.

In 1977, when the Janata government came to power, I received a communication from Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, the then External Affairs Minister, offering me the assignment of ambassador of India at Washington. I was not at all keen to take up this assignment, because the Emergency had just been lifted and I was very keen to stay on in the country instead of taking up an assignment abroad. I sent a courteous replay to Shri Vajpayee requesting him to kindly

pardon me for my inability to accept the offer which he had made to me. But afterwards, I changed my mind, and I accepted the offer. When I went to Washington, the words of Thacker came back to my mind. Thacker had made one mistake—he had referred to Rome when actually it was in Washington and I occupied the beautiful, spacious mansion. I did stay there for almost two years during which period I had the opportunity of coming back to India a few times at my own cost. It was one of the most rewarding experiences in my life, and yet I was so foolish as to decline it in the first instance.

The most incredible experience of clairvoyance or precognition in my life was connected with Mrs. Indira Gandhi's case which culminated in the declaration of the Emergency.

The Allahabad High Court had, in the month of June 1975, decided that the election of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to Parliament should be set aside. That meant that she would cease to be a member of the Lok Sabha with a potential risk to her prime



ministership. Mrs. Gandhi filed an appeal in the Supreme Court and her application for interim relief was argued by me on 23 June, 1975.

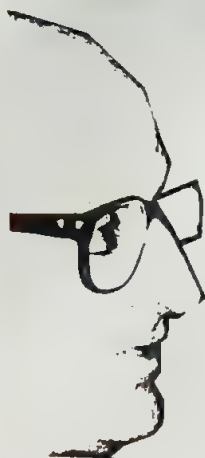
Mr. Justice Krishna Iyer heard the application and

passed the order of interim relief on the next day. The interim order was that pending the hearing and final disposal of the appeal, Mrs. Gandhi could continue to sit in the Lok Sabha and participate in the proceedings of that House like any other member, and could also continue to be the prime minister of India. The only restriction on her was that she was not given the right to vote. The judge mentioned that this did not involve any hardship because Parliament was not in session at that time and that I could renew the application for the right to vote when Parliament reassembled. The evening of that very day (24 June

1975) I saw Mrs. Gandhi at her residence and told her that I found the interim order very satisfactory and she should not worry about the case since the judgement of the trial court did not seem to be correct on the recorded evidence.

On the plane which I boarded to return to Bombay, next to me was seated an elderly, simple man dressed to khadi, carrying a khadi cloth bag. He asked me what had happened that day in the prime minister's case and I told him briefly what the judge had decided. He related how he was an inmate of a Gandhi ashram in Bangalore and that he had been out of the ashram since May 1975 to conduct one of his periodic tours in different parts of India. He mentioned the name of a clairvoyant in Bangalore who had made some predictions which he thought were rather curious. The conversation between us ran somewhat as follows :

When I left the ashram in May 1975 the clairvoyant told me that the prime minister would lose the case which she was fighting in the Allahabad High Court and yet, after losing the case, she



would become the most powerful woman in the world'.

I asked in surprise. 'How can Mrs. Indira Gandhi become any more powerful than she is today?

When she is already the head of the largest democracy on earth, what can possibly add to her power?

'I do not know. I am only repeating to you what he said'.

Unimpressed, I did not bother even to make a mental note of the name of the clairvoyant. But to carry on the conversation, I asked. 'Did the soothsayer say anything else?

'Yes. He said that the extraordinary power which the prime minister is to acquire will end in March 1977'.

'Did he mention the precise month and year?'

'Yes, he mentioned

specifically that the cessation of the extraordinary power would be in March 1977'.

'Did he make any other prediction?'

'Yes, he said that Jayaprakash Narayan who is today the most popular figure in India's public life, would be stricken by a fatal illness which would carry him away in about two years. He also said that Shri Y.B. Chavan who aspires to be the prime minister of India would never attain that position'.

I came home, wondering what the future would bring. In less than thirty-six hours the Emergency was declared, the invaluable fundamental rights of the people were suspended, and the prime minister virtually acquired all the powers of the leader of a totalitarian state. That was the black morning of 26 June 1975.

In the days immediately following the declaration of the Emergency, my mind kept on reverting to the four forecasts. I invited for a quiet dinner at my residence the then editor of the *Times of India* and a few other



well-known  
journalists and  
related to them  
my  
conversation  
with the  
Gandhian  
ashramite in  
the plane. The  
next month I  
repeated the  
story to  
Ram Nath  
Goenka of the

*Indian Express*, who was literally hounded by the Congress government during the Emergency. Those were the days of gloom and despair, and the only streak of light was the prediction that the totalitarianism would end in March 1977. I need hardly mention that all the predictions were accurately fulfilled- the assumption of supremacy which made Mrs Indira Gandhi the most powerful woman in the world, the cessation of that supremacy in March 1977, the death of Jayaprakash Narayan in October 1979, and Shri Y.B. Chavan dying in November 1984 without fulfilling his ambition of

becoming the prime minister.

I did not meet Mrs Gandhi again till the evening of 22 March 1977 when the results of the election showed that the Janata Party had won a landslide victory and Mrs. Gandhi had to resign as the prime minister. I was in Delhi on that day and called on Mrs. Gandhi at her residence. I related to her the incident of my conversation with the total stranger on the plane in June 1975 and said, 'Indiraji, if it be any consolation, may I tell you that what has happened since the election case was filed against you in the Allahabad High Court seems to have been preordained'. She had tears in her eyes - the only time I saw her in such a sad mood.

It would be preposterous to try to give any explanation for the episodes I have related truthfully except on the hypothesis of preordination and precognition.

I am sorry to find that the hubris of modern science has passed into a byword. In this latest book *Black Holes and Baby Universes*, the brilliant physicist, Professor Stephen Hawking writes, 'I do not agree with the



view that the universe is a mystery'. This shocks me beyond words. To me it is not only a mystery of the most profound nature, but an infinite cluster of millions and millions of incredible,

insoluble mysteries which the human mind (as distinct from the human spirit) will never be able to unravel. Albert Einstein, the greatest scientific intellect of our age, had the right attitude : 'The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious ..... the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science'.

I do not believe that the human brain, which according to Professor Hawking contains 'about hundred million billion particles', will ever be able to discover the 'set of laws which completely determine the evolution of the universe from its

initial state' - until the human spirit reaches a higher stage of evolution which Sri Aurobindo called the supramental stage.

Some years ago, there was a dinner party in Bombay where among the guests were India's leading scientist, Dr. Homi Bhabha, and a humble, simple man from Lucknow who was reputed to have some unusual powers. At the persuasion of some of the guests, Dr. Bhabha consented to test the man's powers. Dr. Bhabha took out a one-rupee note from his wallet and without looking at it, put it in his side pocket and asked the stranger whether he could tell the number on the note. The man mentioned the number with total accuracy. It could not be a case of mind reading because Dr. Bhabha had deliberately refrained from looking at the note. Later, when I met Dr. Bhabha in Delhi, I asked him whether there was any scientific explanation for the unusual faculty of the Lucknow man. He confessed that up to now no explanation known to science was available.

When you read Dr. Raynor

BHAVAN'S JOURNAL



Johnson's *The Imprisoned Splendour* and Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics*, you understand why Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore were convinced that India is

destined to be the teacher of all lands. Saints

never contradict one another and mystics have never been known to disagree. Eastern culture and Western culture share the same heritage of spiritual experience. More and more men have begun to realize that we are the Peeping Toms at the keyhole of eternity. I should like to echo the wish with which Arthur Koestler ends *The Roots of Coincidence* that we would take the stuffing out of the keyhole, which blocks even our limited view.

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***Presenting copies of his books, Essential Unity of All Religions and India's Priceless Heritage, to Nobel Laureate Dr Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State, on his visit to the Bhavan's head office on 8 June 1999***



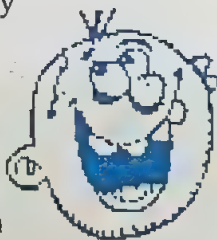
# HUMOUR IN SANSKRIT

JUSTICE A.S.P. AYYAR, M.A. (OXON), I.C.S.

The general impression is that Sanskrit literature is sublime and has no place for humour. This is entirely erroneous. The Sanskrit authors knew that many a great truth can be taught in the attractive form of a humorous story or a joke, just as physicians know that effective medicines are best administered in the shape of sugar-coated pills.

**I**N the very beginning, Vedic rishis began their speculation

into philosophy by asking, "Why do the sun and the moon and the stars not fall down from the sky? Why does the ocean not overflow? Why do the rivers keep on flowing?" thus showing their humorous bent of mind. In the great Upanishads, like *Brihadaranyaka* and *Isa*, we get the humorous remark, uttered



in all seriousness, "Into blind darkness enter the ignorant: Into greater darkness enter they with knowledge". This was, of course, intended to make the ignorant learn and the learned not to get conceited. A famous teacher asked his pupils to dedicate their lives to God and His work for *Lokasangraha* (Universal Welfare). The pupils said that they could not do so till they were told why they were



born. The teacher replied, "You are like the man bitten by a snake who would

not take the medicine which is sure to cure him till he is shown the snake which bit him". In the Mahabharata, a materialist, in search of pleasures, is compared to a rat which goes eternally in search of food and enters a snake's hole and is eaten up by the snake. The demon Hiranyaksha, when stealing the world to hide it under the ocean, was detected by Lord Vishnu, in his *Varahavatara*, carrying the earth tucked under his arm pit! He was given chase, like a policeman chasing the member of a criminal tribe carrying a stolen article. Nachiketas asked his father, Vijasravasa, why he was gifting away cows which had eaten the last straw, drunk the last water, and given the last drop of milk, and did not gift away the most precious things he possessed, as ordained by the scriptures. Nachiketas went on "To whom will you give me away, father?"

"To death shall I give you" said the enraged father. Nachiketas, in order to keep his father's word, sought out Yama, the Lord of Death. But Yama was not expecting him but was away on his errands in quest of those doomed to death. Nachiketas had to wait at the door of Yama for three days. So, Yama was ashamed and had to give out to him the truth about life and death as compensation.

The seriousness of the situation prevents the reader from seeing the humour of the situation. So, too, when Yama told Savitri that she could ask for any boon except the life of her husband, she made him give her a boon that she would have a hundred sons, and when Yama asked her why she was lingering, she reminded him that she could not have the hundred sons by her husband unless he was restored to life, and he had to restore her husband to life and promise him four hundred years of life.

Lord Buddha was a powerful humourist. When a Brahmin spoke about Brahman, the beloved, he asked him, "Where is



When asked, "How many stars are there in heaven"? the Bodhisatva replied, "Two more than the sands on the seashore".

he? and the Brahmin replied, "He is unknowable". Immediately, Lord Buddha replied, "You are speaking like a man who says that he has a beloved sweet heart and when asked, 'Who is she?' says 'I don't know'. To another expounder of Brahman, he said, "You are like the man who speaks of a splendid staircase fitted to a fine mansion and when asked where the building and staircase are, replies that the building is not yet built or the staircase fitted. To a man who told him on the bank of a river, that he could go to heaven at will and could call any god he liked to his side, he said, "Call the other bank of the river to come to this bank; before you claim to call the gods to your side," and silenced the humbug. In a Jataka story; when asked, "How many stars are there in heaven"? the Bodhisatva replied, "Two more

than the sands on the seashore".

In the Kathakosa of the Jains, the power of anger is shown in a humorous story. Two sages were doing great penance in Kunala city, but there was no rain in the country for a long time. So, the country-folk, who saw the sages doing the penance, said that such sages were powerless to bring rain. Greatly angered, the sages cried out, "Let the sky open and rain continuously for fifteen days", and it did, and the entire people, including the sages, were washed away and drowned.

The *Hitopadesa* and *Panchatantra* contain innumerable stories of delicate humour. Thus, a crocodile is asked by his wife to bring his friend, a monkey by treachery to her house, so that she might kill him and eat his heart. The crocodile beguiled the monkey and got it into the water.



## The *Hitopadesa* and *Panchatantra* contain innumerable stories of delicate humour.

promising to take it to a Rose-apple tree on an inland, but was foolish enough in mid-stream to tell the monkey the real reason. Then the monkey said to the crocodile, "Dear friend, nothing would have delighted me more than to oblige your wife. But I have left my heart behind on a tree on the shore. So take me back to the shore so that I may bring it and regale your wife with it". The crocodile took him back to the land, and the monkey, of course, escaped. A clever bird told a monkey, which was trying to light up some leaves with a fire-fly, mistaking it for fire, "Don't waste your effort. It is only a fire-fly and not fire". The enraged monkey caught hold of the bird and hit its head repeatedly, on the ground till it died, crying out, "You presume, you miserable bird, not even one-

twelfth of my size, to teach me wisdom", thus showing how stupid people react to wise advice.

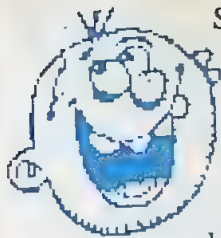
In the dramas too we find many examples of subtle humour. Thus, in *Vikramorvasiyam* of Kalidasa, King Vikramaditya falls in love with Urvashi and is found out by his queen, the Princess of Benares. So, he falls at her feet and begs her to forgive him. But she goes away without a word. When the jester asked the King in wonder why the queen went away without a word, in spite of his prostrating to her, the King replied, "You fool, will a thousand prostrations by a man offering an imitation gem make a jeweller accept it as genuine?" In *Sakuntala*, Dushyanta tells the jester, referring to his not having seen *Sakuntala*, "Your

eyes have not seen anything worthy of being seen", and the jester replies, "Why, Sir, I have been seeing your every day". In the *Avimaraka of Bhasa*, Princess Kurangi is desperate at her separation from her lover Avimaraka and resolves to commit suicide by hanging herself. She is about to hang herself with a rope when she hears a clap of thunder and cried out, "Oh! save me, save me". Again, Avimaraka goes to Kurangi's chambers accompanied by his friend, the jester, and makes the jester also invisible with a charm he had. The jester is afraid at not seeing his shadow and thinks that he has disappeared altogether. So he spits into his hand, and is reassured that has not disappeared.

In the *Kathasaritsagara* of Somadeva, some vagabonds want to make a fool of a Brahmin. They ask him to go and chant Sama Veda to a charming dancing girl. That man does so and is driven out with blows by the dancing girl and her lovers. A vegetarian Brahmin who is excessively proud of his vegetarianism, and is contemptuous of non-vegetarianism, gets a thorn on his foot and when he draws it out, red blood flows, and Sri Krishna appears as a school-boy and asks him, "How is it that you have got blood, like the non-vegetarians, and not sap like the vegetarian trees and plants?" The Satavahana King sports with his wife in a river and splashes water on her. She cries out to him in

### Day Dreamer

An unmarried man gets a gift of flour, and imagines selling it and purchasing goats, and with the profits, cows, and then land, and then a big house and finally marrying a beautiful woman and having a child by her, and kicking her when she neglects the child. He finally kicks the pot of flour, imagining that he is kicking his wife, and this brings an abrupt end to his day-dreams.



Sanskrit,  
"Madoka"  
(Ma-Udaka:  
no water  
please), and  
he thinks that  
she wants the

sweet pudding (madoka) and orders for it. She is ashamed at his ignorance and points it out to him, and the king learns Sanskrit and Sandhi (Grammatical rules regarding conjunction).

The lady-mathematician, Lilavati, gives us some exquisite examples of mathematical humour. She says "minus 4 into minus 4 will not make plus 16 any more than multiplying debts by contracting new debts to wipe out old debts will make a man free of all debts". That is a rare example of humour in thought. She explained the might of unity by saying, "Put two 1's separately. They are only 2. Put them together they become 11. Put five 1's separately. They are only 5. Put them together, they become 11,111. So a panchayat of five fools is more than two thousand times stronger than the five fools

composing it". She added, "A husband and wife before marriage are only two. After marriage they become eleven, husband, wife and nine children". She went on to say that God is the supreme zero (poojya) as like the zero connecting the positive and negative members. He connects the great and the small ones, the successful and the unsuccessful ones, and that he who neglects the supreme zero (poojya) becomes a cypher (poojyam). She has also given the humorous story of the two cobras, showing the baseless fear that when two mighty powers fight, both will disappear. She said that two cobras equally long and equally strong began to swallow each other by the tail and soon each swallowed the other and both disappeared.

Humour in Sanskrit literature ranges from the earth earthy in the story of the cunning slut to the worldly wisdom of the story of the two-headed bird and the supreme wisdom of story of the eight blind men and the elephant.



# Krishna and



## Human Relations - I

HARINDRA DAVE

**T**HE Mahabharata commences with a prayer to Lord Narayana of whom Sri Krishna is a manifestation :

नारायणं नमस्कृत्य नरं चैव नरोत्तमम् ।  
देवीं सरस्वतीं चैव ततो जयमुदीरयेत् ॥

.... but, Krishna as an individual character enters the Mahabharata at a very late stage. In 'Adi Parva' Krishna's entry on the scene is described as :

यस्तु नारायणो नाम देवदेवः सनातनः ।  
तस्यांशो मानुषेष्वासीद् वासुदेवः  
प्रतापवान् ॥

(Adi - 61; 90)

"It was from the eternal God of Gods Shri Narayana, that the omnipotent, Almighty Vasudev was born on the earth".

Now we await the entry of Sri Krishna and observe him perform an active role in the Mahabharata. For the first time,

Krishna as a character enters Mahabharata during Draupadi Swayamvar.

The whole story of the Mahabharata is dependent on the powerful and influential character of Krishna, whose entry into the Mahabharata is very undramatic. In doing so, the eminent poet Veda Vyasa has shown the very depth of his strength. A more amateur poet would have surely dramatised the first entry of Krishna, but Veda Vyasa very well knows that the entry of the sun in the sky cannot be dramatised!

And so, when Drustadyumna reads out the list of the various personalities present on the occasion of Draupadi's Swayamvar, the very first name on the list is not that of Krishna, but of Duryodhana. After Duryodhana's name, in sixteen

stanzas, names of different kings and dignitaries are mentioned. In the seventeenth stanza also there are many names, amongst which one of the names casually mentioned is .....

संकर्षणो वासुदेवो ।

(Adi. 177; 16)

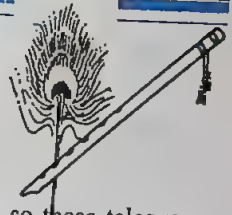
Sankarshana is Balram and Vasudev is Krishna. After these names, the list has more names. This way, the character on which the whole story of Mahabharata depends, becomes active for the first time. Krishna's name is casually mentioned amongst the other guests that have arrived for the occasion. The poet here very subtly mentions Krishna's name with a strange observation.

During the swayamvar, all the participants are engrossed in looking at Draupadi ..... Draupadi who is .....

वर्तमाने समाजे तु रमणीयेऽह्नि षोडशे,  
आम्लुतांगी सुवसना सर्वाभरणभूषिता ।  
वीरकास्यमुपादाय कांचन समलंकृतम्,  
अवतीर्णा ततोऽरंगं द्रौपदी, भरतर्षभ ॥

(Adi. 176; 29.30)

Before contemplating this stanza, it is necessary to find out who \*\*\*\* is. To know this, we have to discern the details of the Mahabharata plot. This story is Veda Vyasa's creation. In those days, there were no printing



presses and so these tales were carried by word of mouth. Likewise, Vaishampayana told this story to Janamejaya, son of the King Pariksheet and great grand son of Arjuna, when at that time, Vaishmpayana had addressed Janamejaya as Bharatarshabh. (भरतर्षभ) and at that time, Soota — Vanshi Purani Ugrashrawa was present, who in turn narrated the story to the Shaunakadi saints. Hence, this story that has come to us, was told from the memory of Ugrashrawa.

Now then, going back to the description of Draupadi, the poet says :

"On the sixteenth day of menstruation, Draupadi, after taking bath and wearing beautiful clothes along with pleasant looking ornaments - here, she is shown loaded with ornaments - but she has worn 'समलंकृतम्' jewellery - looking very beautiful, enters the stage....."

तां द्रौपदीं प्रेक्ष्य तदा स्म सर्वे  
कन्दर्पबाणाभिहता बभूवुः ॥

(Adi. 178; 12)

"It was natural at that time, for the kings and dignitaries to gape at and be awe-struck by the beauty of Draupadi; the sons of Pandu were no exception. They were injured by Cupid's arrow on seeing such a dazzling beauty!"

It is here that Krishna differs from the other guests and shows his unique quality. When everyone was staring at Draupadi, stupefied, what was Krishna busy with?

दृष्ट्वा हि तान्मत्त गजेन्द्र रुषान्  
पञ्चाभिषद्गानिव वारणेन्द्रान् ।  
भस्मावृताङ्गानिव हव्यवाहान्  
प्रार्थान् प्रदध्यौ स यदुग्रवीरः ॥

(Adi. 178; 9)

"The way excited elephants run after the lotus flowers, the kings stared at Draupadi. Amongst the other dignitaries were present the five sons of Pandu sons, who looked like burning coals, below the ashes, and Krishna was looking at them and he recognised them as Pandavas!"

There were two individuals, anxiously awaiting the Pandavas

**The way the poet introduced Krishna in the Mahabharata, without dramatising his entry, established the supremacy of Krishna among men, like the sun, who does not require any dramatic introduction!**

— one was Krishna and another was King Drupad. For the king, the presence of the Pandavas was his selfish wish; as he wanted the expert archer Arjuna to claim the hand of his daughter in marriage! But Krishna's concern for the Pandavas was unselfish. Not only were they his cousins, but were virtuous and capable of practising 'Dharma'. It was a period of time when Aryavarta was slipping into the hands of unlawful and sinful people, and Krishna wanted that the reins should once again be held by religious and pious people.

The way the poet introduced Krishna in the Mahabharata, without dramatising his entry, established the supremacy of Krishna among men, like the sun,

who does not require any dramatic introduction!

Dhrutarashtra receives the news of the Pandavas' arrival at the Swayamvar. He is the greatest villain of Mahabharata. He now consults Duryodhana, Karna, and others as to how to deal with the Pandavas now that their identity had been revealed. Duryodhana suggests that a way should be found to divide the Pandavas by creating a feeling of dissatisfaction in the mind of Drupadi; and also a way to bribe King Drupad against Pandavas. But Karna has already assessed the situation. He says : "Pandavas

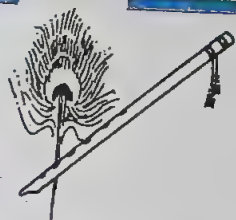
should be destroyed before Krishna rushes to their help-

वसूनि विविधाभोगान् राज्यमेव च केवलम् ।  
नात्याज्यमस्ति कृष्णस्य पांडवार्थे मटीपते ॥

(Adi. 194; 16)

Karna emphatically says : "for the benefit of the Pandavas, Krishna can abandon his wealth, his happiness, his sensual pleasures and also his kingdom".

The friendship between Krishna and Arjuna is ideal and their human relationship unique which is painted out by Karna.



The Pandavas would become invincible should Krishna take their side, because Krishna would risk everything for the sake of the Pandavas".

At this stage of discussion, Vidura suggests that the Pandavas should be recalled and half of the regime should be handed over to them, for which they are

entitled. Bhishma and Drona also were of the same opinion. Vidura also shows his disagreement to Karna's proposal to fight with the Pandavas. He says :

यतः कृष्णस्ततस्तेः स्युर्यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः ।

(Adi. 197; 25)

"Where there is Krishna there is everything; where there is Krishna there is victory!"

(Translated from the Gujarati original by Smt. Bharati Harindra Dave)



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# Sankaradeva Saint-Reformer of Assam

SHRI JUSTICE S.N. PHUKAN,  
JUDGE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

**M** A H A T M A Gandhi has said about Mahaprabhu Sankaradeva: "A great Vaishnava revival under Sankaradeva in the 16th Century has made Assamese people kindly, tolerant and humane. There is no sign anywhere of that form of untouchability which is to be found in South India. Assam, indeed, is fortunate, for Sankaradeva has, five centuries back, given the Assamese people an ideal which is also ideal of Ram rajaya".

In the month of October, 1449 a beautiful child was born in the family of Siromani or overlord of Bhuyan chiefs, who held their small principalities on both the

banks of the mighty river Brahmaputra. It was said that as the father of Sri Sankaradeva was offering worship to Lord Siva for a child, this child was named Sankara or Sankaravara.

Sri Sankaradeva lost his parents at an early age and he was looked after and brought up by his grand-mother. He went to a school which was under the headmastership of a well-known brahman scholar named Mahendra Kandali. He was a devoted student and on one mid-day Mahendra Kandali entered the school premises only to find Sankara sleeping there with a cobra raising its hood to provide shade to the boy in the hot sun. Mahendra Kandali immediately recognised the greatness of the

**During short period of six or seven years, Sankaradeva came out as a finished scholar in the usual Sanskrit lore, including the Vedas, the two Indian epics, the puranas etc. He could write poems and also acquired a great knowledge of Indian philosophy.**

boy and he asked all other students to call him Sankaradeva. From history we find that, during short period of six or seven years, Sankaradeva came out as a finished scholar in the usual Sanskrit lore, including the Vedas, the two Indian epics, the puranas etc. He could write poems and also acquired a great knowledge of Indian philosophy.

Paying his Guru Dakshina, Sankara returned home ready to begin life. Being a member of a family of overlords of Bhuyans and having had sound education, wisdom and ability, he could have organised all his family members to hold on against the Ahom king a dynasty of rulers in eastern Assam since the second part of

13th century. But Sri Sankaradeva decided to live an intellectual life. His kith and kin insisted on marriage at a very early stage. He married a beautiful Kayastha girl, who, however, died soon after giving birth to a girl child, Manu or Haripriya. He wanted to go on pilgrimage to the other parts of India but had to wait for a few years till he could marry the daughter off to a young Bhuyan, Hari. In the year 1481, when Sri Sankaradeva was thirty-two years old, he set out on his pilgrimage along with 17 persons including Mahendra Kandali and others. This group visited all the temples of Northern India, more particularly sacred to Vishnu, and returned after 12 years. The

pilgrims also visited Puri and stayed there for seven years. He carried home with him a deep impression of the nascent neo-Vaishnava. While moving around he composed poems and also did other religious literary works on Vaishnav.

Though Sri Sankaradeva was charged within with the light of another kingdom, the Kingdom of God and life of liberalism evoked by the neo-vaishnava movement and decided on the mission of life, he on the pressure of grandmother and for the purpose of administration and house-hold responsibilities had to marry again in the year 1497 and resumed his duties as Siromani Bhuyan. But he could not take his mind away from the scriptures and constructed a small temple in a lonely place where he could sit together with other people for discussing sastras and hold prayers together. During this period one saintly person namely Jagadisa Misra from Puri, carrying with him "Bhagavata-purana", came to Bardowa and

The Delhi Kendra of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is organising a lecture series on "Divine Integrators Saints of India" with the object of highlighting the contributions made by these men of religion towards national integration and promotion of peace and harmony among people. These lectures are also intended to acquaint Delhi audiences with the noble work done by less known saints who hailed from different regions of the country and belonged to different periods of India's history.

The 9th lecture in this series was delivered on Saturday, the 24th July 1999 at Bhavan's hall by Shri Justice S.N. Phukan, Judge Supreme Court of India on

stayed with Sankaradeva for about a year.

In the meantime there developed a period of unrest. There was a friction of Kachari Bara-Bhuyans. Finding it difficult to stay Sri Sankaradeva advised

## Sankaradeva's Neo-Vaishnavism

"Srimanta Sankaradeva", a saint-reformer of Assam of the 15th century. In his lecture Shri Phukan hailed Sankaradeva as the greatest builder of Assam who gave the people of Assam a new life in the field of religion, social reform as well as in literature, drama, dance etc. Sankaradeva laid the foundation of the Sattras institutions which have been functioning as organs of religious, cultural and literary propagation for more than 500 years. He also established Namghars who performed similar functions at the village level.

Shri Phukan explained that Sankaradeva preached a neo-Vaishnavism for eastern India in his holy book "Kirtana"

emphasising Bhakti as the best means of worship of God. Through the institutions of Sattras and Namghars, Sankaradeva contributed towards establishment of a democratic social order abolishing caste distinction.

Shri Phukan said that if today in Assam there was no dowry system, bride burning and caste system as prevalent in other parts of the country and this was due to the work of the great saint.

Dr. Janice Darbari, who has authored a book on Sankaradeva after extensively touring in Assam, also spoke on the occasion and emphasised the saint's twin messages of love and peace.

all the Bhuyans to retreat gracefully to the immediate north of the Brahmaputra. This was done in the year 1516-17. But as Sri Sankaradeva and his followers found themselves open to the dangers of the expanding Koch

power, they moved into the Ahom kingdom and stationed themselves at a place Gangmau, near a place now called Biswanathghat. But this place also was in within reach of the Koches as well as of the Daflas inhabiting the northern

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mountains.

Therefore, they moved to the east to the only river island in the world on river Brahmaputra known as Majuli. Here Sri Sankaradeva got his dearest disciple and successor Madhavadeva. It may be mentioned that Madhavadeva was a strong believer of Saktism but he found Sri Sankaradeva a formidable person who cut through every argument put forth in defence of Saktism and blood sacrifices which were prohibited by the Vaishnava. After much argument Madhava's offensive against the ekasarana cult of Sankaradeva collapsed and realised that Sankaradeva was the real Guru and, therefore, he completely dedicated himself to the faith of Sankaradeva.

At this stage it would be appropriate to mention the political condition prevailing in the State of Assam, during that period. Assam was in a great turmoil and its condition was still worse in the name of religion. The dignity of man and woman

specially belonging to lower castes had no meaning in the society. There was rise and fall of about half a dozen dynasties such as the Khenas, Kochas, Kacharis, Chutiyas and the like. As stated earlier, the predecessor of Sankaradeva founded small kingdoms known as Bhuyan Rajyas. After the fall of the old Hindu kingdom, there were many principalities where frequent rifts occurred within themselves. The Ahoms had many civil wars with the Kacharis and other powers whom they ultimately subjugated. The Ahoms started to absorb all petty kings, rulers and their kingdoms and as they grew in power, extended their territory. Gradually, they brought the whole of the Brahmaputra valley under their domination.

During that period Saktishm had been the leading form of Hinduism in north-east India for centuries. Sakti worshippers used various tantric works and the fundamental idea was emphasised on the procreative power of Nature. They practised worship

of many gods and goddesses and sacrificed living beings to appease their gods and goddesses.

As Sankaradeva struggled against tantrism and fought against idol-worship and the sacrifices practised by the Saktas, he had to suffer a lot, particularly in the hands of Brahmans.

The teachings of Sankaradeva were found to be much disturbing to the existing priesthood, for the new religion brought up a new priesthood and, to a great extent, minimized the importance of the older religions and even bypassed it in some respects. The non-vishnuite sects, in particular, who were hard hit by the new challenge, then took up the challenge and showed Sankaradeva open hostility by abusing and molesting his followers. Sankaradeva arranged to defend his religion and with the Brahmans in a religious gathering and there was a debate. By persuasive questioning he made these scholars admit that his religious and philosophical

teaching as correct even from the traditional point of view and it enhanced the prestige of Sankaradeva and his followers. However, the priesthood did not declare cessation of hostilities and the Ahom King (1497-1539) as they were still following the old faith, was approached with the allegation that the Vaishnavas had tampered with their traditional religious practices and tried to impress on the king that it would bring great calamity to his kingdom. The king was alarmed at the reported disaffection among people in a part of his kingdom. The king, considering the political situation, passed immediate orders for a trial of the Vaishnava leaders who were summoned to the capital to explain as to why he should not be punished for irreligious acts. The trial was short. Sankaradeva was acquitted very honourably as nothing wrong was found in the principles he professed. King found priesthood, brought very wrong charges against a saintly person. □

## ॥ श्री अजितनाथ ॥



**"LORD AJITANATHA"**

Ajitanatha was born as second Tirthankara, many years after Lord Rsabha attained emancipation. He was born to the King of Vinita, Jitasatru and Queen Vijayadevi on the 13th day of the bright fortnight of Vaisakha. His mother saw the auspicious fourteen dreams and gave birth to him. He was called 'Ajita' as none could conquer his father when he was in his mother's womb.

Ajita remained detached and carried out his material obligations with detachment. Although his parents got him married to beautiful damsels, they could not deviate him from the chosen path of detachment. When his father expressed his desire to crown him the King, he declined his proposal; instead suggested that his uncle Sumitra be crowned King. But when his uncle too refused, he unwillingly accepted the kingship and ruled the country ably for a long time. Later he crowned his cousin Sagara as King (who later on became Cakravarthy Sagara) and

gave charity for one full year and then renounced all the worldly pleasures vowing never to commit any sin by thought, word and deed.

All Thirthankaras from their birth possess perfect knowledge acquired through senses and mind (Matijñāna), scriptural knowledge (Śrutajñāna) and clairvoyance (avadhijñāna), when they renounce the world, they acquire telepathy (Manah-paryaya Jñāna) and when they destroy the knowledge - obscuring, vision - obscuring, delusion-producing and power-obscuring karmas, they attain omniscience and cognize all things of past, present and future simultaneously.

Ajitanatha too possessed the first three types of knowledge from birth and so never underwent any formal education. When he became a monk he acquired telepathic knowledge and after twelve years of austere practices and spiritual contemplation he destroyed the above mentioned four-fold destructive karmas and became omniscient. After which he came amidst the masses, established the four-fold church of Sadhu, Sadhvi, Sravaka and Sravika and preached the truth of Right-faith, Right knowledge and Right conduct, until his age-defining karmas terminated and later attained Moksha.

By **Priya Jain**

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# *Life* in harmony with *Nature*

## Greening the Desert

Some years ago, the district of Alwar in Rajasthan was declared a 'black zone' by the state government because the area had no underground water table. It was written off as unfit for living or cultivation. That was until a 40-year-old government employee called Rajindera Singh visited Alwar on assignment as a project officer.

Narrates Singh: "An old man told me that people from the city merely came for assessments. No concrete work was ever done."

It was a turning point in Singh's life. He resigned from his comfortable job and moved to Alwar. With the help of the locals, he dug up a large pond. During the rains, the pond filled up and supplied water to the wells in the area.

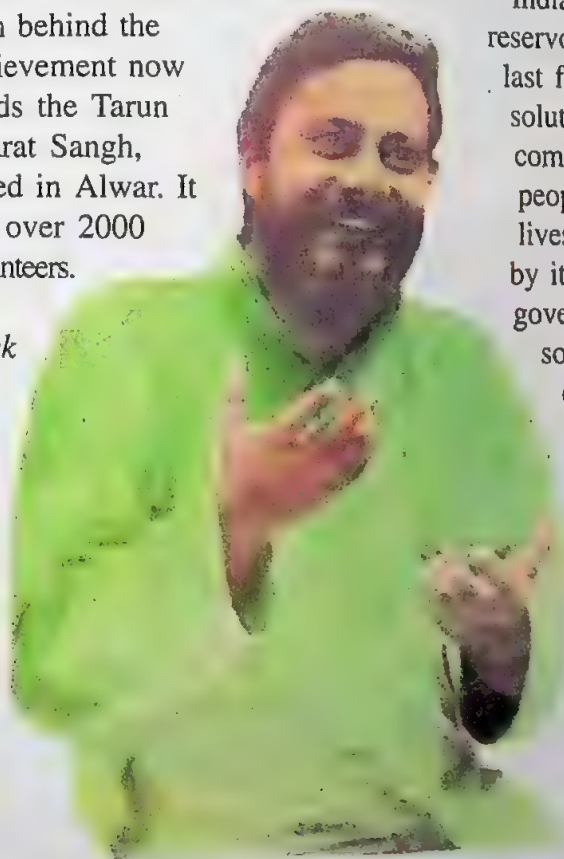
"This was our inspiration," says Singh. "We now knew that we could make things work for ourselves."

Today, Alwar has been listed as a 'white zone', which means that the underground water table has

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risen considerably and the area is now habitable. The man behind the achievement now heads the Tarun Bharat Sangh, based in Alwar. It has over 2000 volunteers.

*The  
Week*



word of warning.

"India's water reservoirs will not last forever. The solutions need to come from the people whose lives are affected by it. No government can solve water disputes until they let the people take part in the decision-making."

magazine  
nominated Rajindera Singh as  
its 'Man of the Year' in  
1998.

And Singh has a last

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# DIVINE INTEGRATORS

**Swami Sivananda Maharaj**

Sept 8, 1887 - July 14, 1963



Sivanandaji popularised the concept of the 'Yoga of Synthesis' and advocated the simultaneous practice of all the four types of Yogas - Bhakti, Karma, Jnana and Rajayoga (physical and psychic). He stressed six types of culture leading to the final spiritual perfection viz. Health, Energy, Ethical, Will, Heart and Psychic. The Divine Life Society, which he founded in Holy Rishikesh in 1936, has bloomed into an international centre for spiritual sadhana.

Swami Sivananda was born on Sept. 8, 1887 in the village of Pattamadai in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. Qualifying himself as a doctor, he went to Malaya where he endeared himself to the people with his precept, and practice, of the age - old philosophy of "service before self".

At the height of his career, he left, Malaya for the Himalaya and took to the life of a wandering mendicant, minstrel of God. At Rishikesh, he was initiated into the holy order of Sannyasa on June 1, 1924. Thenceforth Kuppuswamy assumed the monastic name of Swami Sivananda.

After years of spiritual struggle, Swamiji heard the command from within : "Go thee forth and share thy wisdom with all". He has authored about 260 books.

On July 14, 1963 at Rishikesh Swamiji attained Mahasamadhi at 76. His last advice to people was : "Remember all that is good and true and forget all that is base and false."

Swamiji was a patron - Saint of the Bhavan.

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*Episodes from  
Sane Guruji's  
'Shyamchee Aayee'-14*

## Love All

V.S.R.K

"My parents were showing me extraordinary love. The seed of my loving nature was sown in those days. How can I ever pay that debt of boundless love? I must love all my brothers and sisters in the wide world. That way I can redeem a part of my debt".

**S**HYAM tells his listeners a very touching episode of his own jealousy towards his elder brother and eventual realisation of his folly thanks to the admonition of his 'Aayee'.

Shyam and his elder brother ('Dada') had come home for the vacation in the month of May - Shyam from Dapoli and his brother from

Poona. 'Dada' was staying with his maternal uncle. As Poona was far away from Palgad, he came home once in two years unlike Shyam who could make it every week-end.

Dada had to leave Poona at a time when small pox was raging. He

had become a victim of

it and somehow managed to return home. The pustules had not completely dried up and he felt a

**The Twenty-Sixth  
Night**

## Raamarakshaa Stotram (Contd.)

आरामः कल्पवृक्षाणां विरामः सकलापदाम ।

अभिरामः त्रिलोकानां रामः श्रीमान स नः प्रभुः ॥

*Aaraamah Kalpavrikshanaam Viraamah Sakalaapudaam*

*Abhiraamah Trilokaanaam Raamah Shreemaan Sa Nah Prabhu*

That great Rama is our lord who is the grantor of comfort from the garden of Kalpavriksha (which fulfils any desire of any person), who ends the misery of all types and who is the most beautiful in all the three worlds.

तरुणौ रूपसंपन्नौ सुकुमारौ महाबलौ ।

पुंडरिक विशालाक्षौ चीरकृष्णाजिनांबरौ ॥

*Tarunau Roopasampannau sukumarou mahaabalou*

*Pundareeka Vishaalaakshau Cheerakrishnaajinaambarau*

May the two supreme sons of Dasaratha, Rama and Lakshmana.

फलमूलाशिनौ दांती तापसौ ब्रह्मचारिणौ ।

पुत्री दशरथस्यैतौ भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ॥

शरण्यौ सर्वसत्त्वानां श्रेष्ठौ सर्वधनुष्मताम् ।

रक्षः कुलनिहंतारौ त्रायेतां नो रघूत्तमौ ॥

*Phalamoolaashinau daantau taapasau bruhmachaarinau*

*Putrau Dasharathasaitau bhraatarau Raamalakshmanau*

*Sharanyau Sarvasattvaanam shresthau sarvadhanushmataam*

*Rakshahkulanihantarau traayetaam no raghuttamau*

Who are youthful, who have good personality, who are beautiful youth, mighty, wide-eyed like the lotus, who are clothed in barks and the skin of the dark coloured deer, who live on fruits and roots, composed, saintly in character, brahmacharis, give succour to all the creatures; who are the champions amongst all the wielders of the bow and who are the annihilators of the entire rakshasa dynasty-protect us.

आत्तसज्ज धनुषाविपुस्पृशा वक्षयाशुगनि षंग संगिनौ ।

रक्षणाय मम रामलक्ष्मणावग्रतः पथि सदैव गच्छताम् ॥

*Aattasajja dhanushaavishusprushaa vakshayaashugani shanga sanginau*

*Rakshanaaya mama Raamalakhmanaavagratah pathi sadaiva gachataam*

May Rama and Lakshmana who carry stringed bows and are always in readiness with the arrow and who carry a quiver with innumerable arrows, ever precede me in the path, for my protection.

सन्नद्धः कवची खड्गी चापबाणधरो युवा ।

गच्छन् मनोरथान्नश्च रामः पातु सलक्ष्मणः ॥

*Sannaddhah kavachi khadgi chaapabaanadharo yuvaa*

*Gacchan manorathaanscha Raamah Paatu Salakshmanah*

May lord Rama along with Lakshmana who are ever-ready, armoured, sporting swords in the hand, wielding bow and arrows, and young, precede me always, for protecting my ambitions.

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burning sensation all over the body and at the soles. Mother gave him onion-syrup and such other things that would help keep the body cool. Shyam remonstrated with his mother : "You don't like me. Only Dada will have onion-syrup, a lot of ghee, curd and what not. Dada is lucky. Perhaps, if I had smallpox....."

Dada heard Shyam's complaint to their mother and told her : "Mother, I am really ashamed to eat all the things you give me. I feel that I am now all right. Why not all of us equally share onion-syrup, ghee, curd and all other good things?"

Shyam's mother was horrified. She told Shyam : "Shyam, don't you know that I give all these things to your Dada because his eyes and soles are burning? Are we born only to eat? You say, 'Why didn't I get smallpox?' What a foolish talk? You are healthy and yet you imagine that you are ill. Don't you remember how much was Ram loved by Lakshmana and Bharata? You know the Ramayana and yet forget those noble qualities of the

## *Great Indian Classics Retold*

brothers. Has Dada become a stranger to you? Sometimes, don't I massage your feet? Don't I prepare sweets for you? Why should you feel jealous of your brother, Shyam?"

Dada, listening to our mother, told her; "Aayee, Shyam doesn't really mean anything when he complains to you. Won't you prepare 'Pangas' for all of us? May I bring plantain leaves?"

Mother turned to Shyam and said : "Shyam, go and get some plantain leaves. Take this knife and cut only the top leaves".

Mother prepared 'Pangas' (a sweet-cake) and gave them to the brothers.

On another occasion, Shyam refused to play 'viti-dandu' (Gilli-danda or village cricket) with his brother. When Dada started playing bow-and-arrow and aimed an arrow at a tree, Shyam asked : "Why are you causing pain to the tree?"

Shyam told his listeners :

"I ran away in anger. I didn't love Dada. But I was trying show off my love of trees! It was a kind of deception. How can one, who doesn't love his own brother, love trees?"

There was another occasion when Shyam refused to massage the soles of Dada. Mother had to do it. But after some time, feeling sorry that he had made his mother do the massaging, Shyam told her, "Mother, you may go. I shall press his feet. Mother, please move aside".

Shyam told his listeners : "My anger was all gone. As the sun set, so did my anger".

That night Durva Aji came to Shyam's house. Shyam wanted her to sing the 'Song of Abhimanyu' as she was good at singing.

But mother said : "To-day Aji will sing a nice song. It is about 'Rag' - a dirty piece of cloth". The story was about Sri Krishna and his love for Subhadra and Draupadi. The substance of the song was as follows :

The composer of the song has raised the question : Whom did

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Sri Krishna love more - his sister Subhadra or 'adopted' sister Draupadi? He himself answers : Draupadi. This answer he gives in the form of a story. The celestial Narada, while on his rounds of the three worlds, meets Krishna who happened to be with the Pandavas. He asked Sri Krishna : 'Lord! I have a complaint. 'Krishna' means impartiality and I am telling the people that you are really so. But at one place, someone told me : 'Narada, don't praise Krishna too much. He loves Draupadi more than Subhadra. Why this partiality?' Now, Krishna, please let me know if this is true. Krishna asked Narada to get the answer from Subhadra and Draupadi. 'Now, Narada', he said 'go to Subhadra and tell her that Krishna has cut his finger. If she gives you a piece of cloth to tie up the wound, bring it here. Otherwise, go straight to Draupadi and tell her the same

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See what happens'.

Narada went to Subhadra first and she received him with due honours. 'Do sit down and let us talk for a while', she said. But Narada said. 'I have no time. I must hurry up'. He told her that Krishna had cut his finger. She replied : "Oh Narada, I have many pieces of silk but not a rag to tie up Krishna's wound. What shall I do?".

Narada rushed to Draupadi who was making a garland of flowers. She received him with endearing words and said : "O Narada, please sit on this stool and have this garland. I know you are here because of Krishna. You are all like the bees hovering around a flower. Don't rob me of my Krishna. Let him be here for some time'.

Narada told her that Krishna had cut his finger.

"Is it true, Narada? How deep is the cut?" So saying, she tore off a piece from her silk upper cloth and urged him to take it quickly to Krishna.

The composer said in his song:

"Gold-embroidered Peetambar

She tore off and gave Narada

## *Great Indian Classics Retold*

a piece!

Narayan is the 'most befitting' brother of Draupadi.

When Durva Aji, who had rendered the song with emotion, had finished, mother asked Shyam : "Shyam, did you listen to it carefully?"

"Yes, mother. This noon I refused to press Dada's soles. I did not allow him to take onion-syrup. Subhadra, though his own sister, did not part with a rag to tie up the wound of Krishna. But Draupadi did. You asked Aji to sing this song to put me to shame".

"No, not to put you to shame but make you love your brother".

Shyam told his listeners : "I got up and caught hold of Dada's hands. Brother, I shall love you always. From to-day I won't say 'no' to you".

"Dada said : 'Shyam! What is this? I have already forgotten what you said and did'. Dada turned to mother and said :

'Mother, we may occasionally quarrel but we shall embrace each other soon after that'.

Mother said : "Love each other. That is divine".

### **The twenty-seventh night**

Shyam tells his listeners of the trouble his father took to bring him sweet 'Kharvas' prepared out of milk. The old man, not very neatly dressed, brought the sweetmeat to Shyam's school, trudging the 19 km road. Shyam asked his father : "Bhau, why have you come here? Our bell will ring just now. I would have met you at home". Shyam felt ashamed of the slovenly dress of his father. But the father ignored

## *Great Indian Classics Retold*

his questions and asked him and his friends to partake of the sweetmeat. Shyam felt contrite. He told his listeners : "My parents were showing me extraordinary love. The seed of my loving nature was sown in those days. How can I ever pay that debt of boundless love? I must love all my brothers and sisters in the wide world. That way I can redeem a part of my debt".

(To be contd.)

### **The Saint And The Law**

**Dr. V. Gaurishanker**

In the captioned article published in 'Bhavan's Journal' Annual Number of Aug 15, 1999, the following sentence occurs on page 192 :

"Justice Chinnappa Reddy said that if it was sacrilegious on the part of Muslims to worship in any other language than in that in the Koran, it is equally sacrilegious to use any language other than *Tamil* in the temples". The word *Tamil* should be substituted by '*Sanskrit*'.

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# Sexualization of Modern Culture - I

PITIRIM A. SOROKIN

**D**URING the last two centuries, and particularly the last few decades, every phase of culture is being invaded by sex. Our civilization has become so preoccupied with sex that it is now beginning to ooze from all pores of life.

## Literature

In its topics personages, scenes, and aims, our literature is largely centred on sex, especially its pathological forms.

In order to gain perspective, let us glance at the main stages through which Western literature has passed from the Middle Ages to the present time.

Medieval literature, as well as sculpture, painting, music, drama, and architecture, from the sixth to the tenth century was almost

exclusively religious. Scarcely any secular masterpieces were produced in that period. Most of the formal literature consisted of interpretations of the Bible and hagiography; its personages were God, saints, and angels; the mysteries of the Fall, of incarnation, crucifixion, redemption, and resurrection, of sin and salvation, were its dramas, - a literature of the human soul conversing with God. It was not designed for the profit and fame of its author; neither did it serve the purpose of providing relaxation and sensual enjoyment, nor of exciting the reader. If a few references to sexual immorality are found, as in the *Altdeutsche Gesprache* of the eighth century or in the *Modus Leibung*, they are usually condemnatory and serve as a contrast to what was held to

be good and proper. Like other Medieval arts, the literature was created (in the terms of Theophilus) *nec humane laudis amore, nec temporalis premii cupiditate...sed in augmentum honoris et gloriae nominis Dei* (for the greater honour and glory of the name of God).

When we turn to the fourteenth century, the picture changes notably. Secular literature now emerges, and depending on the country, represents 45 to 70 per cent of the writings. This secular literature, which descends from the Kingdom of God to the realm of the epic, tells us of outstanding heroes, - the Round Table knights of the Arthurian romances, and the heroic-tragic personages of *Vision Concerning Piers Plowman*, *La Chanson de Roland*, *Tristan et Iseult*, the *Ruodlieb*, the *Nibelungenlied*, and the first part of the *Roman de la Rose* and of the Divine Comedy. When these heroes break the moral and religious commandments, they are tragic figures, victims of an inescapable destiny, of fated passion that

carries them to death and redemption. Heterosexual love is depicted either in its noblest, most romantic and platonic form, or in deeply tragic patterns. Little of the coarse, cynical, debasing, or erotic is to be found, except in a few important works like the *Pelerinage de charlemagne* and the second part of the *Roman de la Rose*, although in the *Schwanke* or *fabliaux* stories and songs which were considered suitable only for drinking and stag parties, the strictly erotic, even indecent aspects of love are frequently mentioned.

From the fourteenth century to the present, secular literature has continued to grow at the expense of the religious. By now, the latter has shrunk to a small fraction of the significant literary output.

Parallel with this secularization has been the use of characters drawn everyday life, - housewives and husbands, merchants and workers, farmers and professionals, and other common types. And in the last century, much literature has centred on the personalities and adventures of subnormal and

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abnormal people, - prostitutes and mistresses, street urchins and criminals, the mentally and emotionally deranged, and other social derelicts. There has been a growing preoccupation with the subsocial sewers, - the broken home of disloyal parents and unloved children, the bedroom of a prostitute, a "Canary Row" brothel, a den of criminals, a ward of the insane, a club of dishonest politicians, a street-corner gang of teen-age delinquents, the office of a huckster, the ostentatious mansion of a cynical business Mogul, a hate-laden prison, a "street car named desire", a crime-ridden waterfront, the courtroom of a dishonest judge, the jungle of cattle-murdering and meat-packing yards. These and hundreds of similar scenes are exemplary of a large part of modern Western literature, which has become increasingly a veritable museum of human pathology.

There has been a parallel transmutation of the experience of love. From the pure and noble or the tragic, it has progressively devolved. The common and

prosaic, but usually licit sexual love that is portrayed in the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has in the last fifty years been increasingly displaced by various forms of abnormal, perverse, vulgar, picaresque, exotic, and even monstrous forms, - the sex adventures of urbanized cavemen and rapists, the loves of adulterers and fornicators, of masochists and sadists, of prostitutes, mistresses, play boys, and entertainment personalities. Juicy "loves", "its", "ids", "orgasms", and "libidos" are seductively prepared and skillfully served with all the trimmings.

Designed to excite the fading lust of readers, and thereby increase the sales of these literary sex-tonics, much of contemporary Western literature has become Freudian through and through. It is preoccupied with "dirt-painting" of genital, anal, oral, cutaneous, homosexual, and incestuous "loves". It is absorbed in literary psychoanalysis of various complexes, - the castration, the

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**Oedipus, the Tetanus, the Narcissus, and other pathological forms. It has degraded and denied the great, noble, and joyfully beautiful values of normal married love.**

American literature entered this stage of intense sexualization somewhat later than did the European. While the latter revealed some fairly coarse sexuality during the Italian Renaissance and then in the eighteenth century, the former remained essentially uncorrupted until the second half of the nineteenth century. And not until the twentieth century did American literature become sex-centered and sex-preoccupied, and in its low-grade variety a sham for commercial exploitation. It has now caught up with and possibly surpassed, the sexualization of European, literature.

Almost all eminent American writers of the last fifty years, - Dreiser, Lewis, O'Neill, Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Farrell - and a legion of less notable ones have paid their tribute to sex, either by making it the main topic of many of their

works, or, what is perhaps more symptomatic, by devoting to it much attention in works supposedly dealing with problems quite different. In books of this latter sort, sex topics could easily have been omitted; yet erotic scenes are painted onto each canvas, whether of the Spanish Civil War, of the migration of Okies, or of the Southern Jukes and Kallikaks.

What is even more significant, many of these authors display the erotic excesses and disloyalties of their characters as perfectly normal. **Whereas the great writers of the nineteenth century, like Tolstoy and Flaubert, depicted illicit passion as a tragedy for which hero and heroine alike paid with their lives or by long suffering, most of the adulteries and other sins treated in contemporary literature are considered by the authors enjoyable adventures in the monotonous existence of modern men and women.** Sometimes such illicit relationships are described as a commendable liberation from the antiquated marriage bonds. At

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other times they are considered hygienic actions freeing individuals from their repressions, psychoneurosis, and other mental disorders. Not infrequently they are heralded as harbingers of a "higher" form of companionate marriage. Rarely, if ever, are they condemned as a dangerous disease. By such treatment, modern literature disinhibits rather than wisely restrains lust. It undermines rather than vitalizes marriages and the family. If weakens rather than reinforces the control of animal propensities by man's higher self. In all these respects, it demoralizes rather than integrates the total personality.

When we turn to the sham literature of today, we find an atmosphere even more saturated by sex. For in this pulp writing, sexualization has gone much farther, and has assumed much uglier forms than in the serious literature. The sham literature of our age is designed for the commercial cultivation, propagation, and exploitation of the most degraded forms of behaviour. It is pornography that

appeals to the basest propensities of that "worst of the beast", as the demoralized human animal was named by Plato and Aristotle. The world of this popular literature is a sort of human zoo, inhabited by raped, mutilated, and murdered females, and by he-males outmatching in bestiality and caveman and out-lusting the lustiest of animals; male and female alike are hardened in cynical contempt of human life and values. And what is especially symptomatic is that many of these human animals are made to seem to luxuriate in this way of life, just as, we must assume, the readers enjoy it. This cheap Dante's inferno of aphrodisiacs is painted in the most captivating colours. Instead of exhibiting its fifth and rottenness, the pulp-sexualists daze the reader with the glamour of "smartness", "orgasmic" curves, "dynamic" lines, violent passions, and "freedom unlimited" to do anything one wants to do.

Giving detailed descriptions of various techniques of sexual approach, and vivid scenes of kissing, embracing, and copulating, and while brutally

dramatizing rape and other sexual perversions, this pornographically illustrated pulp-literature demoralizes and dehumanizes millions of readers. Its audience, as well as its quantity, is incomparably larger than that of serious literature. This pulp stuff is poured onto the market in hundreds of thousands of copies of dime and quarter novels, in millions of copies of various magazines, in many millions of erotic comics and periodical stories. The sadistic novels of Mickey Spillane have sold more than 25 million copies! The total output, of this sort of stuff is to be counted in the hundreds of millions. In addition, some of this material is turned into popular movies, is brought into millions of homes by radio and television, and is even dramatized on the legitimate stage. All in all, this stuff has become omnipresent in our lives, and everyone of us is incessantly and increasingly exposed to its deadly radiations.

Large scale manufacture and commercial exploitation of these sex-saturated books would not be possible if they did not appeal to

the common literary tastes of millions. Whether we like it or not, the obsession with sex in our literature is an ugly fact beyond reasonable doubt.

### **Painting and Sculpture**

The general trend in our pictures, photographs, sculpture, and other visual arts has been toward a more naked, more sensuous representation of the human body.

In the Medieval period, the rendering of divine and human figures avoided the reproduction of a sensually nude body. Instead, they were draped, usually from head to foot. If a nude figure was now and then depicted, as for instance in the pictures and ivories of the Crucifixion or of the baby Jesus, the nudity was ascetic.

In our study of some 2,00,000 pictures and sculptures we found virtually no erotic representations of the body from the tenth to the thirteenth century, but from then to the present, the percentage steadily increased : 0.4 for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; 10.8 for the sixteenth; 21.3 for the seventeenth; 36.4 for the eighteenth; 25.1 for the

nineteenth; and 38.1 for the twentieth to 1920.

For American art, no comparable statistics are available, as no one has yet undertaken such a study. However, it is possible to state that a similar trend has been taking place, with two secondary differences : first, up to the twentieth century the increase of erotic representations of the human body probably somewhat lagged behind in America; and second, in the twentieth century, it has probably been greater in this country than in Europe. This long-term trend is still continuing. They are promoting a bigger and less restrained sexualization and therefore visual rendering of all sorts of human figures are quite common. They live in an environment saturated with exhibitionistic or teasingly semi-draped nudity.

In this respect, both Europe and America have been repeating the cycle experienced by several preceding cultures. At the early and then at the creatively expanding periods of their histories, the Egyptians, the

Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Aegean Cretans, the Greeks, the Etruscans, and the Romans were, except among the lower orders, averse to stripping completely the rendered figures. But the visual arts at the decadent stages of these cultures adopted sensual nudity and rendered it more and more erotic. During the early period of Greek and Roman culture, the rendered figures of their deities, heroes, and mortals, especially those of women, were completely draped from head to foot : the Athena, Aphrodite, and Venus of this period were depicted as robust and chaste, without a trace of voluptuousness, as were also Zeus, Apollo, and even the serious young euphebus, Eros, and the bearded and garbed Dionysus, or Bacchus. If now and then a naked body was represented, its nudity was dryly hieratic, devoid of eroticism. Subsequently, in the decadent stages of these civilizations, the draperies began to slip off the shoulders of the Greek and Roman figures, until the Aphrodites and Dianas appeared in sexual nudity. Similarly, the virile and impassive

Appollo was transformed into the equivocal and sensual euphebus, the serious Eros into a play boy, the garbed Dionysus into an effeminate and erotic youth.

This old story is being repeated by the Euro-American culture in the visual rendering of the human figure.

Another significant detail can be mentioned in the recurrence of these cycles. During the decadent stages of these cultures, women became the favourite subject of pictures and sculptures. A pretty

female face, an alluring feminine figure with voluptuous curves was rendered as frequently then as now.

There is no need to stress further the remarkable similarity of the visual arts of the over-sexed, decadent periods of the past with that contemporary Western culture. It needs only to be added that the sexual behaviour of men and women during those periods was very much like that of increasing millions today.

*(To be continued)*

### **Bone Surgery : An Appeal**

Smt. Rathika Varadarajan (29 years) is suffering from a peculiar orthopaedic problem. Her right leg is becoming shorter and she has acute leg pain, nausea and ear-ache. An operation is to be performed at the hip. This surgery will cost two lakhs rupees which the patient cannot afford. Kind-hearted persons may send their contributions to The Director, Ubhaya Vedanta International Research Centre, RB/H/10/11, C.R. Colony, Mumbai - 400 037, under intimation to Smt. Radhika Varadarajan, W-3-C P & T Quarters, Valluvar Circle, Renganathan Gardens, Anna Nagar, Chennai - 600 040.

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# World of Books

Adi Shankara's  
Vivekachudamani : By K.R.  
Krishnaswamy. Published by :  
Srivatsa Brothers,  
Banashankari II Stage,  
Bangalore - 560070. Sole  
Distributors : Vedanta Book  
House, Chamarajpet, Bangalore  
- 560018. Price : Rs.225/-

**A**DI Shankara's personality is quite appropriately compared to the lofty and magnificent ranges of the Himalayas. In the ranges of Himalayas originate mighty rivers like Ganga, Sindhu, Brahmaputra. Likewise in the same ranges are borm springs, streams and rivulets also, which ripple fascinatingly and mingle with some mighty river and ultimately enter the great ocean. The numerous works originating from Shankara Bhagavatpada are also like this. His Bhashyas on Prasthanatraya

i.e., the Brahmasutras, the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita, with their high spirited declarations, 'Aham Brahmasmi', 'Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma' etc., can be compared to the exuberant and flooding rivers flowing with express force raising energetic thunders. Even intellectuals, who dare with a mighty heart, may find it difficult to swim in them. But there are other compositions of Shankara, which are very enchanting with a chiselled beauty and fascination also with a distinct cadence and rhythm of their own. They are not swelling floods. They are bewitchingly delightful streams of compositions that enshrine the copious thoughts in a fascinatingly simple and lucid style inviting the initiates to bathe in them happily. Panchadashi, Tattvabodha, Atmabodha are some of the examples of this type. But the finest expression of this type has actually been



# ADVAITHA VIDYACHARYA MAHARAJA SAHEB SRI GOVINDA DEEKSHITHAR PUNYA SMARANA SAMITHI (REGD).

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Sumangali Prarthana : Rs.1000/=	1,500/=	Rs.15,000/=
with feeding to students Rs.500/=	1,500/=	Rs.15,000/=
Rice & Dhal Endowment : (75 kgs per day)	1,000/=	Rs.10,000/=
Vedas & Shastras Education (Siksha) / Rakshana Endowment :	12,000/= P.A. (per Student)	Rs. 1 lakh

We have purchased one building which is to be reconstructed to have approximately 8500 Sq.ft. The estimated cost of construction is Rs.50 lakhs. Any amount by way of donation will be accepted.

वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलम् । वेदो नित्यमधीयताम् । वेदाः वयं वः शरणं प्रपन्नाः । वेदा ये नः परं धनम् ।

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**Vivekachudamani.** Both for men seeking intellectual satisfaction and religious or mystical fulfillment, **Vivekachudamani** has provided the most satisfying path. It is out of sheer compassion, for the laymen as well as initiates, that the Acharya has composed these works. These compositions avoid undue adherence to technical dialectics, arguments etc.

As is common in our scriptural and philosophical texts, the first stanza is a 'mangalacharana'. But it also forms the epitome of Shankara Bhagavatpada's thought on Ultimate Reality. It is the fervent prayer of every religious-minded Hindu that he should realise the nature of the Supreme. After this, Shankara deals with the various steps of realisation of the Supreme and tells us that strict adherence to duties with detachment is an essential step for the realisation of the Ultimate or the Absolute. This helps us in keeping our mind pure. Thus it is just an upakaraka. But it is only through *Jnana* or knowledge one can attain the knowledge that '**Sarvam khalvidam Brahma**'.

Having emphasised the great goal of human life i.e., Mukti, liberation from the cycle of births and deaths, Shankara Bhagavatpada goes on to describe the discipline as well as the qualities required from the aspirant. Then he proceeds to discuss the means of acquiring right knowledge while he stresses here the great importance of the need for an enlightened Guru and the mutual conduct of the seeker and Guru. The nature of the Ultimate Reality and the efforts to realise it are beautifully described through Guru-Shishya conversation. It is emphasised that realisation is possible to one even while living. Before concluding this monumental composition, Acharya Shankara makes clear of his intention. Says he :

"For the understanding of persons desirous of Absolution, the nature of the self has been described through the conversation of the Preceptor and the Pupil".

The solemn cadence of the **Shardulavikridita** metre of the last stanza is a fitting termination to the prophetic discourse running

to 580 stanzas.

Scarcely any introduction is needed for a book that professes to be, as its title says, 'The Crest-jewel of Discrimination'. It is a masterpiece on Advaita Vedanta. Being the quintessence of Shankara Bhagavatpada's Advaita Siddhanta, the whole book is instinct with the prophetic vision of a great SEER, a Man of Realisation.

As to the translators and interpreters of the text, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, their number is legion, which again speaks of its popularity. Still, if it invites an independent, understanding, thorough and systematic new edition like the present one, it shows that its message of hope and cheer to the toiling and suffering humanity is eternal and timeless.

The bringing out of the present edition, one more in the long line, can be well defended as it presents an independent interpretation of its own, mainly based on critical and comparative studies. While the translation is very good, the annotation and the

interpretation have an appeal both to the scholar and the general reader. The volume contains the original text in Devanagari script, its translation, annotation and explanation, stanza-by-stanza in accordance with his deep and mature understanding, reached after a careful and repeated study of it, extending, as told in Introduction and Preface, well over a quarter of a century. The lucid English translations, explanatory notes and comments are indeed very helpful in understanding the spirit of main spiritual teaching.

The author's scholarship is amazing. He has made extraordinary studies not only in Acharya Shankara's works but also in our other spiritual and philosophical works. There is enough evidence to show that he has imbibed the spirit of mature contemplation on the Truth. He has drawn liberally from the right sources i.e., the Upanishads, Gita and Shankara's other works, including devotional hymns.

The litmus test of a new edition of any old text consists in the feeling of a reader that he or

---

## Acharya Shankara is a living voice that can come home to men and women and prepare them to face the ordeals of life.

she has comprehended the text better now than before. We are told in the introduction that the teaching was actually put into practice by the learned author and he lived a life of Jeevan-Mukta (one liberated while still living here), unostentatiously discharging his god-given task, in faith and in the true spirit of the message of the text. Such men, leading their even tenor of life, must be taken to constitute the strength, character and the very back-bone of the society; and so long as the supply of such men and women, in all the grades of society does not run short, our country can face the future fearlessly and confidently. The future is, as Gita tells us, in our keeping.

Acharya Shankara is a living voice that can come home to men and women and infuse into them the glow and courage of conviction and prepare them to face the ordeals of life. The

message of Shankara thus knows no limitations of time, caste or creed, of race or colour.

The volume has a fairly lengthy Introduction by S.L.N. Simha, a close friend of the author and a well wisher of his family. Not only does the introduction give some salient traits of the author and his family but also provides a good approach to the subject. The volume is the author's posthumous publication, thanks to the filial devotion of the author's worthy sons, the Srivatsa brothers. The credit for rediscovering the manuscript goes to them. Their effort is commendable.

We hope that the volume will be received well by laymen and scholars alike. The paper and the printing are good. But it is a great pity that this book should be disfigured by a large number of misprints, particularly in the Sanskrit portion.

— Dr. T.S. Krishnamurthy

**Ganesa-Unravelling An Enigma: By Yuvraj Krishan.** Published by Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Ltd., 41, U.A., Bangalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-110 007. Price Rs.695/- Pages 237 Plus art Plates.

Shri Yuvraj Krishan (B1922) retired as Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General of India in 1980. Subsequently, he served as a member of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission from December, 1988 to January 1995. He also holds a degree in law. It is indeed remarkable that a person, whose career was mainly concerned with mundane audit and accounts, should have varied interests covering history, religion, philosophy and art. His publications are on subjects such as Buddha, Karma, and Democracy; a book on India's partition is on the anvil. He is also the author of about 150 research papers.

Such versatility in a career civil servant is rare at all times and more so at present when there is little inducement to take

to Indological research. Shri Krishan symbolises the intellectual tradition of India beginning with Vyasa and Valmiki. A predecessor of Shri Krishan in the audit department, Shri A. Kalyanaraman, brought out a notable book called 'Arya Tarangini' in 1969.

Shri Krishan's book is a work of laborious research, wide-ranging and deep. One does not look for piety in such an undertaking. The Sculpture of Sri Ganesa from Kumbhakonam is out of place. The author's contention is that the cult of Ganapati evolved from four Vinayakas, gramdevatas (folk deities) associated with evil spirits or male - volent forces - vighnakarta, the creator of obstacles. Ganapati is pauranic in origin (not vedic or epic) and it was during the period of the puranas that he came to be looked upon as 'Vighnaharta', the destroyer of obstacles. From a literary point of view, 'Manavagrihyasutra' (7th to 4th century BC) contains the first references to the four Vinayakas. Later these were amalgamated

into one in the 'Yajnavalkyasmriti' (1-3 centuries A.D.). The absorption of Vinayaka into, what the author calls, the 'Brahminical pantheon' of the great Gods took place in the Gupta period (from the second to the fourth century A.D.) - and the process of brahmanisation was completed during the puranic period. The cult of Ganapati spread to the countries of Asia during the 4th to the 6th centuries. Ganesa is thus India's cultural ambassador.

The first authentic iconography of Ganesa (with two arms) may be traced to the 3rd-5th century A.D. in North India. In the South, the representations of Ganesa appear sporadically from the 4th century A.D. and regularly from the 7th century (Pallava period).

The book is an excellent work of fine scholarship and should be helpful to a better understanding of Ganesa from the historical, literary and iconographic points of view.

— V.S.

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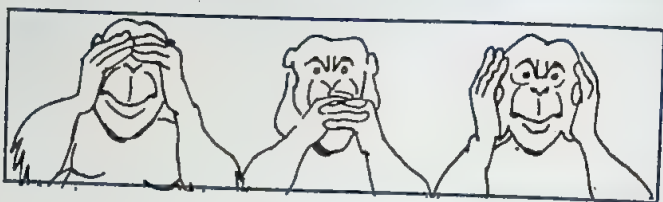
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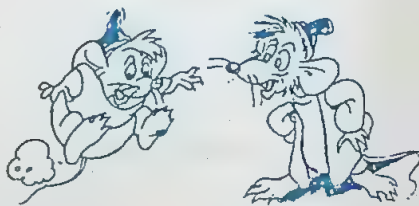
# Without Comment

## Smarter Mice & Men

Next time the damn rat evades the mouse-trap it could turn around and give you a stern lecture on rodent rights.

Scientists have created a smarter mice, as if they were not already smart enough. Jokes apart, the latest issue of 'Nature' journal has once again raised crucial questions on the ethics of genetic engineering that accompanied the cloning debate.

In the latest development, American scientists have produced significantly smarter mice by adding a single gene to rodent embryos, an alteration that resulted in improved performance on a wide range of learning and memory tasks. The researchers say their creation -



named Doogie mice after Doogie Howser M.D., the TV serial about the student prodigy - has the potential to tackle cognitive disorders in people like old-age related memory loss and Alzheimer's disease.

- Chidanand Rajgatha in *The Indian Express*, Sept. 2, 1999.

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## Video and Newtonian Appeal

"Spend time with a video camera and you will confront some of the primary issues : "What is this fleeting image called life? Why are we here sharing the living moment, a moment that is past yet present? And why are the essential elements of life change, movement, and transformation, but not stability, immobility, and constancy?" Perhaps we need to imbue new technologies with this

philosophical dimension so that their ruthless commercial teeth don't chew us up completely. And maybe we need to blend why and how into a new 'scientific' vision that our time-in-transition requires. A new cocktail. Maybe, with the Newtonian apple's juice added in. Well, the Newtonian apple is not just an innocent fruit as it looks.

- Amrit Gavgar in *The Times of India*, August 30, 1999.

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## The Boy Wonder of Jalna

Dyneshwar Hanwante has no use for computers. He made calculators redundant for himself when he was two. At five, photoelectric theory was exploding in his brain even though this child, from a remote village in Maharashtra's Jalna district, still asks, "Albert Einstein, who?"

Today, at seven, he can explain, in minutest detail, the detrimental effects of large dams, take you through the paces of human evolution and divulge the secrets of the solar system just the

way textbooks do. Only, Dnyaneshwar has never read any. Neither can the boy, who has no access to tomes of any sort except those prescribed for Std. II, explain his intuitive knowledge, "It just comes to me", he shrugs.

He opens the conversation : "So your name is so-and you come from a city called....." Dyaneshwar starts, instantly throwing you off-balance. Next, he tells you about your profession and you are already

on the edge of your seat, waiting for his next pronouncement.

But, with a twinkle in his eye, he says he can tell you what Bal Thackeray needs to do to win the next election. As for Pokhran, well..... "When our scientists

were preparing for a blast, they outwitted the American spy satellites by creating cover of dust over the place where the experiment was done".

- *Indian Express*,  
Aug. 28, 1999.

### *In the next issue of Bhavan's Journal*

\* **Bhavan's President on Constitutional Reforms.**

\* **Sexualization of Modern Culture - 2.**

- Dr. Pitirim Sorokin.

\* **The National Scenario - Issues to Ponder Over**

- Justice Shri Vaman Rao of the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

\* **Krishna & Human Relations**

- Harindra Dave, the noted Gujarati novelist, poet and journalist.

\* **Dakshina Dwaraka.**

\* **Extract from the book of the Fortnight**

- *An Airman's Saga.*

### **Independence Day At Chennai Bhavan's Kendra**

Independence Day was celebrated both at the Bhavan's Kendra and at Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram. The national flag was hoisted at the Kendra by the Director, Shri T.K. Parameswaran.

Shri S.R. Kasturi, Hon. Secretary of the Bhavan's Chennai Kendra, hoisted the flag at the Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram.

The students of Bhavan's P.M.M. Bala Mandir at Mylapore and Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram, Kilpauk, presented a variety entertainment programme.

### **Rashtriya Sewa Dharma Acharya Awards**

Bhavan's President Sri C. Subramaniam deprecated the tendency of present day teachers to follow the dharma of industrialisation rather than seva dharma.

Speaking at a function got up to present Rashtriya Sewa Dharma Awards for 1997 instituted by Bhavan on August 7, in Bangalore, he said the present day teachers treated their profession as any other business or industry and indulged in trade unionism. There were however honourable exceptions such as those who were being honoured with awards on that day.

Karnataka Primary Education Minister, Shri H.G. Govinde Gowda, presented the awards to the five teachers.

The awardees were : Shri K.K. Rajanna of Government High School, Swandenahalli, Tumkur taluk (Sarvothama Acharya); Shri Prabhakara of Sree Siddaganga Pre-university College, Tumkur and Shri A Vyasa Rao of Government High School Pillangiri, Shimoga District (both Visishta Acharya - Madhyamik Shikshana); and Shri R. Rajalakshmi of



**Sri. N. Ramanuja,  
Chairman ,  
Bharatiya Vidya  
Bhuvan giving  
Independence  
Day Message**

Avinashilingam Primary School, Coimbatore, and Shri Vasanta Chari of Kendriya Vidyalaya, IIT, Chennai (both Visishta Acharya - Prathamik Shikshan).

The awards were sponsored by Jindal Aluminium Limited and instituted by the Bhavan in 1990. The Awards carry a citation and prize money of :

Rs. 25,000 for Sarvothama Acharya (one award), Rs. 15,000 for Visishta Acharya (Madhyamik Shikshan)

(two awards) and Rs.15,000 for Visishta Acharya (Prathamik Shiksha) (two awards).

The objective of the Awards is to honour and accord special recognition to school teachers of outstanding character, merit and reputation in general and for excellence in academic proficiency in particular.

Apart from academic achievements, factors such as

**The awardees with  
Primary Education  
Minsister Govinde  
Gowda**



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## BHAVAN'S NEWS

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contribution in fostering national integration and in developing moral and cultural development of students and promoting education among the weaker sections of the society are taken into consideration while selecting the awardees.

### "All In The Family"

On Aug 14, 1999, children of class VB, of Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram, Chennai, participated in "All in the family" - the day camp for parents & children. It was a fine Saturday morning with the sun shining

brightly over Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram as it always does in Chennai. A few scouts could be seen here and there and they were cleaning the school campus for the camp which was to be held shortly. The camp was meant to initiate co-operation among the students and parents. They started arriving at about 9.30 in the morning. The parents, with the help of a few scouts, set up 5 tents. These tents were able to accommodate about 10 children and three parents each. These tents had very interesting names - Jagdish Chandra Bose; Vikram

Sarabhai; M.S. Swaminathan; Homi



Parents and children of class V.B. of Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram, Chennai

Baba & Arya Bhatta. The children had a variety of interesting things to do and they did them whole-heartedly and with loads of enthusiasm and energy. The children first drew and painted different types of leaves and hung the pictures on their bulletin boards which played a great role in enhancing the beauty of the surroundings. After this some of the teachers and parents present taught the children some craft. Then, with the help of the elders the children mapped a route from their houses to the school. The children also did research on insects and wrote a few lines on the same. After all this work, everybody was feeling hungry and broke off for lunch. The scouts who were specifically asked not to bring their lunch shared the children's lunch. After lunch, the children had an exciting and captivating quiz which was followed by a

round of dumb-charade. After both, children who had done well were awarded with small prizes, thus ending the camp in a nice manner. On the whole, the camp was a great success and succeeded in inculcating a sense of responsibility and co-operation among the students-not that the parents benefitted any less. This is a really innovative experiment in togetherness and Rajaji Vidyashram is a path-breaker in this activity. Rajaji Vidyashram is well-known for its creative ambience and concern for the child as a responsible citizen of tomorrow. Children were overwhelmed by the experience. They said, "Thank you parents for sparing your valuable time to be with us. It's great fun watching you organise activities for us. We will remember this day forever. Thank you".

### Three Books Released

Three books viz. 'Shri SriPrakasa - A Political Biography', 'God Exists' and 'An Experiment in spiritual enquiry for the youth' were released at a function held on Aug 12, 1999 at the Bhavan's Chennai Kendra.

The function started with Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram students singing the Sarva Dharma Prayer.

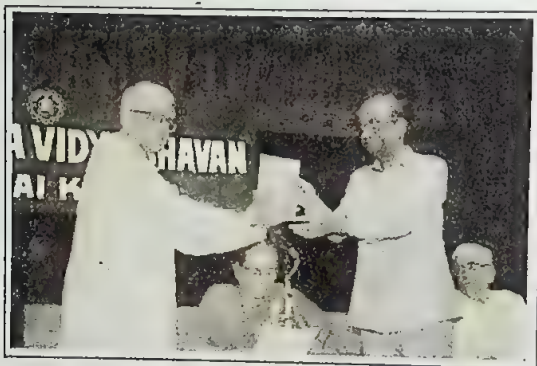
Dr. S.V. Narasimhan, Chairman of Bhavan's Chennai Kendra, in his welcome



Bhavan's President Shri C. Subramaniam, who released the book 'An Experiment in Spiritual Inquiry for the Youth' by Shri C. Shanmuganayagam, handing it over to H. H. Swamini Niranjananandajai. Shri S. V. Narasimhan, Chairman, Bhavan's Chennai Kendra, is seen at extreme right

Bhavan's President Shri C. Subramaniam handing over the first copy of 'Shri SriPrakasa : A Political Biography' by Smt. Nalanjana Kishore to Shri T. Chengalvaroyan, after releasing the book.





**Bhavan's President Shri C. Subramaniam releases the book 'God Exists' by Smt. Uma Sriram and hands over the first copy to Justice P.R. Gokulakrishnan, former Chief Justice, Gujarat High Court.**

address, referred to Bhavan's role in spreading knowledge' and the Bharatiya Culture.

Shri T. Chenagalvaroyan, Freedom fighter, after receiving the first copy of the book on Sri Prakasa authored by Smt. Nilangiana Kishore, paid rich tributes to the former Governor of the composite State of Madras. He said SriPrakasa was a model for others to emulate and that he was a highly respected leader of the freedom movement.

Swamini Niranjananandaji of

Chinmaya Mission, who received the first copy of the book "An Experiment in Spiritual Inquiry for the Youth" by Shri C. Shanmuganayagam, said that the book would be useful in understanding our spiritual heritage.

Shri P.R. Gokulakrishnan, former Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court, received the first copy of Smt. Uma

Sriram's book "God Exists", from the President Shri C. Subramaniam.

Prof. T.S. Devadoss, former Director of the Radhakrishnan Institute of Advanced Studies in Philosophy, Madras University, and Shri C.S. Ramakrishnan of Ramakrishna Mutt, expressed their appreciation of Smt. Uma Sriram's thought - provoking book.

Shri C. Subramaniam, in his concluding remarks, said that the

country could achieve real "Ramarajyam" if our elected representatives followed "Dharma".

Smt. Nilanjana Kishore and Smt. Uma Sriram expressed their gratitude to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for getting the books released by distinguished men.

Sri C. Shanmuganayagam, author of the book "An Experiment in Spiritual Inquiry for the Youth", stationed in Sri Lanka, could not attend the function. However, he was represented by many of his friends and admirers in Chennai.

### **Bhavan's Sainikpuri School Celebrations**

**Bhavan's Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Sainikpuri, Secundarabad**, celebrated its first function on June 29, 1999 as Benediction Ceremony heralding the beginning of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

The programme commenced with the school prayer sung by students, lighting of the lamp and garlanding of the portrait of the Late Brig M.K. Rao, the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya.

Principal Shri T. Prasada Rao welcomed the gathering function.

The Chief Guest of the occasion was Gen K.V. Krishna Rao PVSM (Retd), Ex-Governor of J & K.

**Gen K.V. Krishna Rao PVSM (Retd.)** garlanding the portrait of founder father late Brig. M.K. Rao.



Hon. Director and Vice-Chairman of Bhavan's Sainikpuri Kendra Gen Y.V. Radhakrishna AVSM (Retd.), addressed the gathering and said that "BSRKV believed in 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam'. He recalled by services of the pioneers of the school who had contributed to its growth.

The special invitees were honoured with shawls and among them were :

(a) Smt. Krishna Veni, wife of the late Brig M.K Rao, the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya.

(b) Shri A Suryanarayana and Shri B.V. Sitarama Sastry who were the first few members to attend the first meeting of the Board of Management held on Dec. 13, 1973 to finalise the modalities/details for acquiring

land for the school.

(c) Sri K. Hanumanth Rao, the first Principal of the school. (He had earlier retired as the Educational Officer of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan).

(d) Smt. Satyabhama, recipient of the Best Teacher Award from Kendriya Vidyalaya.

Gen. K.V. Krishna Rao pointed out that the ultimate aim of Education was to get enlightened which could be achieved only through the influence of great men.

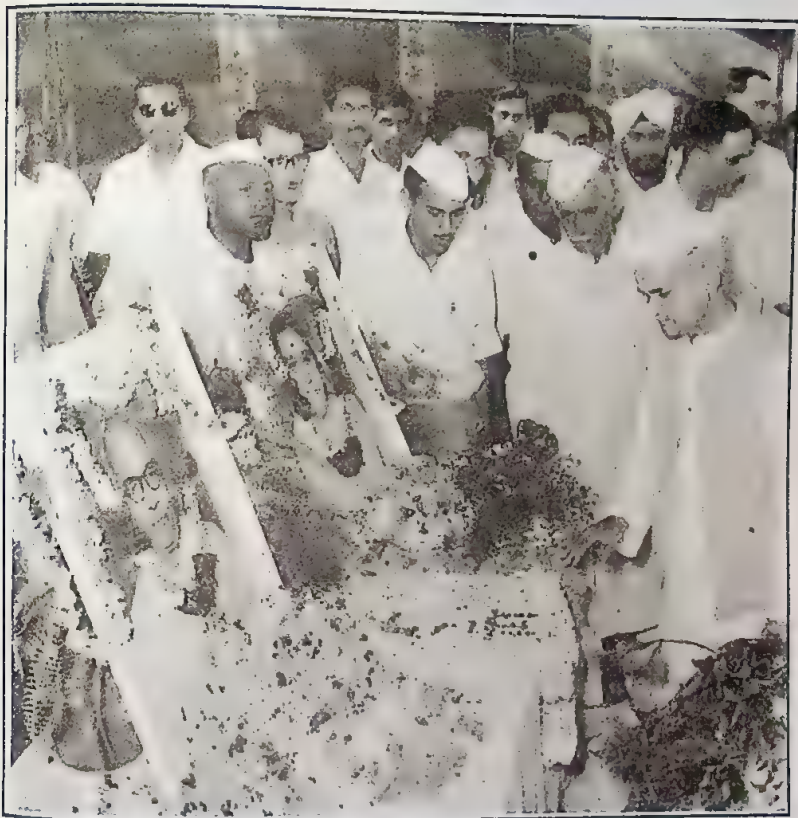
A dance drama depicting and highlighting the different stages of the growth of the school during the last 25 years was depicted by the students. The dance drama was choreographed by Col KK Murthi, Hon Secretary, who was supported by Smt. Meenakshi.

### Heart Surgery : An Appeal

Shri K.L. Vishwanathan, Social worker, 46, Amar Mahal, Mumbai - 89, writes :

Tanmay Kochrekar (3 yr.), only male child of a poor worker, has to undergo heart surgery costing Rs. 65,000/-. The family can mobilise maximum Rs.10,000/- and for the rest they solely depend on charity. Readers are requested to extend a helping hand to save a young life, by generous donation to :

Shri. H.N. Hospital & Research Centre  
A/c Tanmay Kochrekar P. Gordhanbaba Chowk,  
Raja Rammohan Roy Road, Mumbai - 400 004.



**Homage to  
Balwantrai Mehta  
Birth Centenary Year**

**B**ALWANTRAI Mehta was 66 when he died a martyr when his plane was shot down by Pakistan on Sept. 19, 1965. During the three score and six years of his mortal life, he packed so much achievements as a leader of men, a fighter for freedom and a constructive worker as to be remembered with gratitude by his own and the succeeding generations. He plugged into the freedom struggle in 1923, when he was 24, and continued his battle for democracy in his native state of Bhavnagar. He became Prime Minister of Bhavanagar in 1948 and Deputy Prime Minister of Saurashtra State. He was the Chief Minister of Gujarat from 1963 till his tragic end in 1965. On the all-India stage, he played a notable role as one of the framers of the Constitution and a Parliamentarian. He made a notable contribution to the formulation of the concept of Panchayat Raj and its acceptance by the Govt. of India.

To Kulapati K.M. Munshi, Balwantrai Mehta was an intimate friend. He felt his loss deeply. He wanted to bring out 'Shri Balwantrai Mehta Samarak Granth' containing articles and messages from national leaders and others who knew Balwantraiji closely. The commemoration volume unfortunately remained unpublished.

We take the opportunity of Balwantraiji's birth centenary to bring out this supplement in reverential homage to the 'Second Sardar', as Gandhiji hailed this noble, selfless patriot.

# Loksevak Balwantbhai

K.M. MUNSHI

The most enduring and profound contribution of Balvantbhai was to give a concrete shape to the Panchayati Raj concept.

**B**ALWANTBHAI was my intimate friend and his untimely demise is a profound personal loss to me. The country lost a dedicated and devoted soul and Gujarat, an able and versatile administrator. His contributions by way of service to the people and the nation shall always be ranked very high in the history of Indian democracy. A comprehensive overview of his services merit a separate volume by itself - what follows is just a glimpse of his diverse services to our society.

## A Genius In The Making

This bright student responded to Gandhiji's call and plunged into public life at the young age of 20. From that moment till his

untimely death in a treacherous attack on his plane by Pakistan he shouldered many heavy responsibilities and discharged them successfully. A life-member and a leading activist of Lala Lajpat Rai's "Servants of the Peoples Society"; founder of the "Akhil Bharatiya Deshi Rajya Lok Parishad", then the General Secretary and thereafter the Vice-President; the first Chief Minister of Bhavnagar State; Deputy Chief Minister of Saurashtra State after the integration of the princely States; General Secretary of All India Congress Committee under Pandit Nehru as the President; Member of Parliament and the Chairman of the Estimates Committee; President of India - Africa Council; Pioneer of the Panchayati Raj; and Chief Minister of Gujarat before his

**Balwantbhai remained a crusader all his life. He welcomed difficult challenges at the time of the agitation against the Simon Commission and Salt Satyagraha.**

death - all these diverse responsibilities were carried out by him in his characteristic way by Balwantbhai and he left an imprint of his talent and ability in each of these fields.

### **Panchayati Raj Scheme**

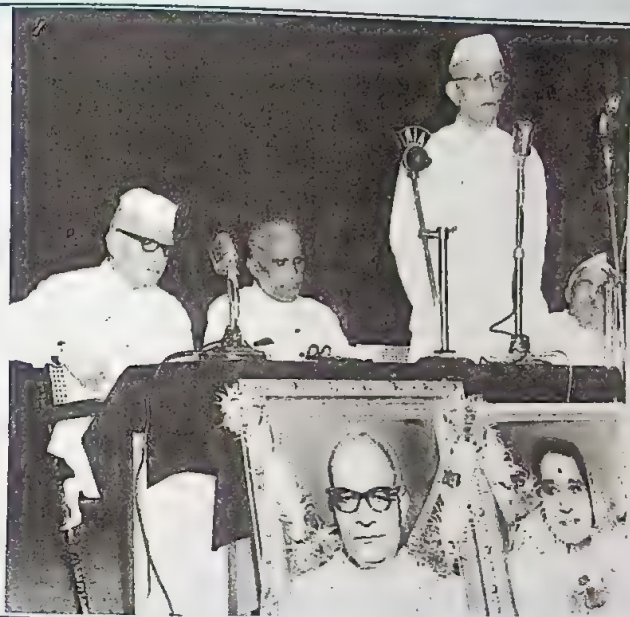
The most enduring and profound contribution of Balwantbhai was to give a concrete shape to the Panchayati Raj concept. Gandhiji had envisaged Panchayati Raj as the foundation of Indian democracy, but the draft constitution prepared by the Constitution Committee did not make even a passing reference to the Panchayati Raj concept. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who was the Chairman of the Constitution Committee, promptly noticed this lapse and it was on account of his

insistence and after detailed deliberations, that Art 40 was incorporated in the Constitution providing for the setting up of Gram Panchayats and obliging the States to confer adequate powers to Gram Panchayats so that they can function in an autonomous manner. We had to wait for another eight years for Panchayati Raj. An in-depth and scholarly report on decentralisation of power was prepared by the Committee under the Chairmanship of Balwantbhai. This report, known as "Balwantrao Mehta Report", ushered in Panchayati Raj.

### **Herculean Efforts**

I am a witness to the tireless work that Balwantbhai put in to prepare this Report. After visiting

## Centenary Tributes



**Paying homage to Balwantrai Mehta at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Mumbai : U. N. Dhebar, Morarji Desai, S. K. Patil and K. M. Munshi**

numerous villages and minutely studying the functioning of thousands of village institutions, interacting with the functionaries and learning about their working and their obstacles, he prepared this invaluable report on Gram Panchayats. This was truly a bright feather in the cap of this versatile man.

Balwantbhai remained a crusader all his life. He welcomed difficult challenges at the time of

the agitation against the Simon Commission and Salt Satyagraha. Out of his forty years in public life, eight years were spent in prison. The death of himself and his wife Sarojben in 1965 due to the shelling of his plane during the Indo-Pak war was distressing but also befitting a greater fighter. Life-long warriors like him cannot aspire for any different end.



## Balwantrai Mehta : Mile Stones

- 1899 : Born on 19th Feb.
- 1904 : Lost his father.
- 1920 : Graduated (B.A.) from Bombay University.
- 1920 : Appointed the Rector of Thakkar Bapa Chatravas, Bhavnagar.
- 1923 : Took part in the Jhanda Satyagraha (Nagpur) and was imprisoned for one year.
- 1923 : The Praja Mandal founded at Bhavnagar.
- 1924 : Joined Lala Lajpat Rai's Servants of the People Society as a life member.
- 1925 : The III Kathiawar ++++++Political Conference held under Mahatma Gandhi's Presidientship.
- 1927 : Took part in Gujarat flood relief work under Sardar Patel.
- 1928 : Participated the Bardoli Satyagraha, was the chief of the Mota Centre.
- 1930 : Participated in the Salt Satyagraha and was imprisoned for 2 years.
- 1932 : Arrested at Ranpur and imprisoned for 6 months.
- 1934 : Was active in Rajasthan Praja Mandal's work.
- 1938 : Compaigned to organise the citizens of the princely states of Maharashtra, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin.
- 1938-39 : Participated in the Rajkot Satyagraha.
- 1939 : Organised a conference under Sardar Patel's Presidentship at Bhavnagar.
- 1940 : Participated in the Individual Satyagraha and was sentenced to jail for one year.
- 1942-45 : Took part in the Quit India Movement and was sentenced to 3 year's imprisonment.
- 1948 : Appointed a member of the Congress Working Committee.
- 1948 : Prime Minister of Bhavanagar and Deputy Prime Minister of Saurashtra.
- 1950 : Appointed General Secretary of Indian National Congress.
- 1952 : Elected to the Lok Sabha and appointed chairman of the Estimates Committee.
- 1958-59 : Was the chairman of the Balwant Rai Committee on Panchayati Raj.
- 1963 : Became Chief Minister of Gujarat.
- 1965 : Died alongwith his wife while inspecting the border areas during the Indo-Pak War Smt. Sarojben.

# A Dedicated Patriot

MORARJI DESAI

**B**ALVANTRAI was born, educated and brought up in the princely State of Bhavnagar. In those days, it was almost impossible for social activists to work for the cause of freedom. In fact, there was a mortal risk involved in such activities. Though the country was rejuvenated by the wind of renaissance, the princely states were still in the dark ages. Those rulers were as ignorant, autocratic and barbaric as the rulers of the medieval times.

The British were the beneficiaries of such a situation. To work for the enlightenment of the people was a daunting task. Many dedicated youths migrated from the princely states but Balwantbhai decided to make his native place his field of action.

Though Bhavnagar was more progressive than the other princely states, to openly

challenge the British empire or to fight for the rights of the people was just not possible. At the same time it was difficult for such public-spirited individuals to remain idle after witnessing the brutalities of the rulers and the helplessness of the people. To awaken these masses from their slumber was imperative. Balwantrai plunged into this work whole-heartedly.

Gandhiji launched a series of constructive work programmes one after the other. To ensure people's participation in these and, at the same time, ensuring that the princely states did not create any obstructions, Balwantbhai took up the causes of Khadi, abolition of untouchability, education particularly of women, and conducted these activities with full vigour. He went from door-to-door to enlist popular support. He went through the villages, in shine and shower. He endured attacks and imprisonments

## Centenary Tributes



Receiving Shri Morarji Desai, Home Minister of multilingual Bombay who arrived at Rajkot on the morning of 10th June 1949. L to R : Samaldas Gandhi, Revenue Minister, Rasikbhai Parikh, Home Minister, Girdharlal Kotak, Food & Agriculture Minister, Shri V. Isvaran, Chief Secretary to the Government, Darbar (Gopaldas), Balwantrai G. Mehta, Communications and Education Minister of Saurashtra

without complaining. He openly and repeatedly confronted the barbaric administration of the princely states to seek justice for the people. His enthusiasm never waned.

He became an all-India figure as a prominent leader of Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad and Rajasthani Praja Parishad. After our independence, Balwantbhai

served the nation in various capacities - as Deputy Chief Minister of Saurashtra State, as the General Secretary of Congress, as a Member of Parliament for ten years and, lastly, as the Chief Minister of Gujarat till his heroic death. As the Chairman of the Estimates Committee of the Parliament, he produced erudite reports. These

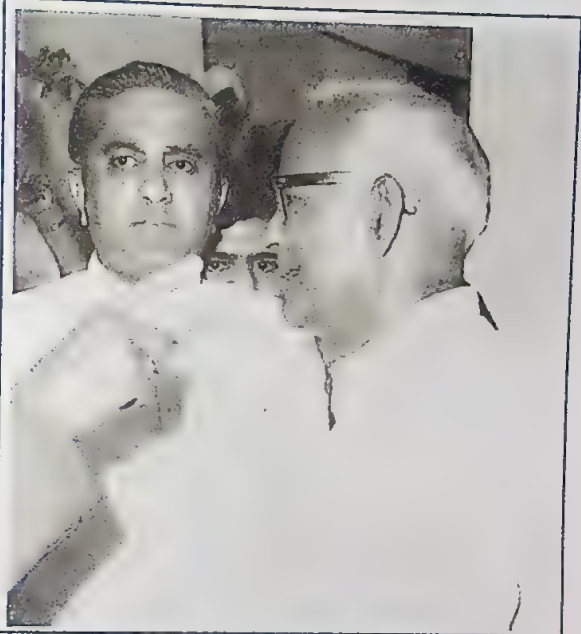
BHAVAN'S JOURNAL

## Centenary Tributes

reports reflect his scholarship, diligence, grasp of the issues concerned and command of expression.

His 'Report on Decentralised Democracy' is a landmark in the history of our democracy. He presented through it the charter of a true democracy consistent with our glorious culture and traditions. A true democracy is one where the maximum power rests with the people and the bare minimum with the government. From this perspective, India will realise true democracy when our villages conduct all their affairs through the Panchayats and without interference from outside. Balwantbhai's notable and lasting contribution to our country is to formulate a precise blue-print of Panchayat administration.

Balwantbhai was a loving



**Balwantrai Mehta with his son Prabhakar**

friend, a devoted activist, a fearless leader, a fine orator and a great patriot. he maintained his cool in all circumstances and could carry on his work even in the most adverse conditions. Adversities did not intimidate him nor did he tire of work. He was ever willing to be of service to his fellow beings. Destiny honoured him with a death befitting a true patriot. □

# An Illustrious Son of India

DR. L.M. SINGHVI, M.P.

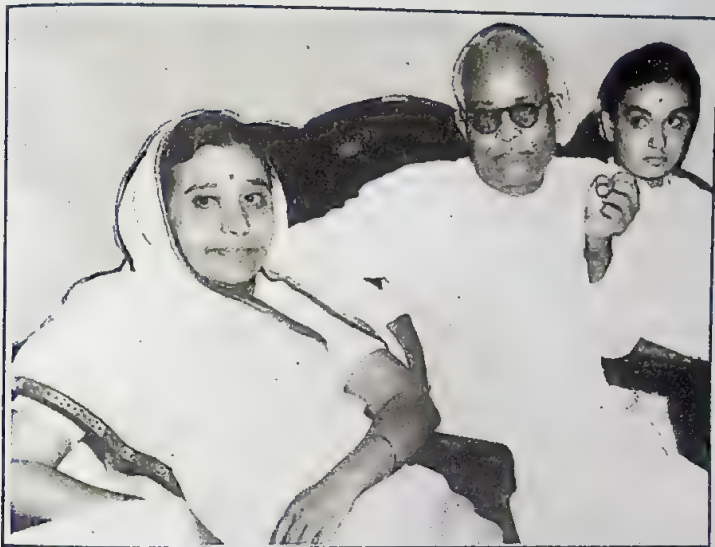
CO-CHAIRMAN BHAVAN INTERNATIONAL AND  
FORMER INDIA'S HIGH COMMISSIONER TO U.K.

Shri Balwantbhai, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi fulfilled the qualities his mentor and master looked for in a public worker. He was "clear as a crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault". He was a man "of strong mind, great heart, true faith and ready hands", a man whom the lust of office could not lure, a man who had a mind and a will of his own, a man who had honour and who was selfless, "a man who lived above the fog in public duty and private thinking".

**T**HE birth centenary of the late Shri Balvantray Mehta this year brings back to me the shock and profound grief of the night of 19th September, 1965, when we learnt that his civilian plane was indiscriminately shot down by Pakistan in a perverse act of war. He and his wife Sarojben died the death of martyrs. The next day, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in the Lok



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**Shri Balwantrai with his wife Sarojben Mehta  
on left and daughter in-law Rekhabehn**

Sabha of which I was then an Independent member feeling made on I had also the melancholy furileg of paying my tribute to dear Balwantbhai who spoke on that occasion were : Professor N.G. Ranga, Professor H.N. Mukherjee, Shri Surendra Nath Dwivedi, Shri U.M. Trivedi, Shri A.C. Guha, Shri P.R. Chakravarti, Shri Oza, Shri Yashpal Singh, and Shri Prakashvir Shashtri. It is my good fortune to be the only one alive among them in this birth

centenary year of Puja Balwantbhai to pay my homage once again to that illustrious son of India. I recall my mentor Dr. K.M. Munshi's fondness, affection and admiration for Shri Balwantbhai and how sad he was when Shri Balwantbhai and Smt. Sarojben passed away. In his obituary reference, Shri Lal Bahadurji referred to Pakistan as "our enemy" with righteous indignation the articles written by the most eminent Indians for the Shri Balwantrai Mehta Memorial

Volume and sent to Dr. K.M. Munshi bear eloquent testimony to the remarkable qualities of the exemplary integrity and the inspiring life-long commitment of that patriot and statesman.

The Lok Sabha obituary reference to Shri Balwantrao Mehta on September 20, 1965 was replete with eulogies of his life and work. Lal Bhadurji recalled that Shri Balwantbhai was (like Shashtriji himself) a member of the Servants of the People Society founded by Lala Lajpat Rai, that he served and worked in the political field on a very small allowance, an honorarium which he used to get from the Society and how Shri Balwantbhai's life was a life of suffering and dedication throughout. Professor Hiren Mukherjee described Shri Balwantbhai Mehta's chairmanship of the Estimates Committee as the most distinguished period in the history of the Estimates Committee. Shri Surendranath Dwivedi narrated that when he asked Shri Balwantbhai at the

Bhubaneshwar aerodrome about the trouble brewing in Kutch, he said, 'Do you think Kutch is the last word? Probably this is the beginning of our hostile relations with Pakistan. I spoke on behalf of Independent members of the House and referred to the valiant and veteran soldier of freedom who died the noble death of a martyr and a hero. I paid my tribute for his outstanding work in mobilising the freedom movement in the princely states "which would always be cherished and enshrined in letters of gold". We all stood in silence in respectful homage to him. Some thirty-four years later I can still feel the solemn sorrow of our silence, grief and indignation.

Shri Balwantbhai, who had a brilliant scholastic career, abjured the promising prospects of many avenues of professional success and personal advancement in his life. He graduated from Bombay University with distinction but did not go to the Convocation; instead he joined the great National Convocation for Freedom for which Mahatma Gandhi had

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## Centenary Tributes

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sounded the trumpet. The cry of his patriotic heart after the colonial brutalities of Jalianwala Bagh and the call of Mahatma Gandhi brought him into the mainstream of national politics. Shri Balwantbhai then took up the struggle for India's independence in princely India. The late Shri Jainarain Vyas and my father, both of them freedom fighters, used to tell me how important was the State People's Conference for the new awakening in princely India, and how Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shri Jamnalal Bajaji, Shri U.N. Dhebar, Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and Shri Balwantrao Mehta, among others, played a key role in mobilising the freedom movement at the grassroots in the citadels of feudalism sheltered and nurtured by British Paramountry and overlordship. That movement was handicapped in a hundred different ways and required steadfastness of spirit, courage and idealism exemplified by Shri Balwantrao Mehta.

In Kathiawad, Shri Balwantbhai made a historic

contribution, away from the limelight of British India but in the eye of the storm. He played an important part in the integration of some 200 large, little and tiny principalities in Saurashtra. He played a significant part in securing recalcitrant Junagrd's accession to India. Mahatma Gandhi described him as the "Sardar of Kathiawad". Shri K. Kamaraj acclaimed him as a pioneer of the freedom movement in the Indian States.

In 1937 Shri Balwantbhai became General Secretary of All India State People's Conference. He was the leading light of Kathiawad Political Conference and toured the whole of Saurashtra bare foot, like a Sanyasi for Swaraj, to bring about political and moral awakening. In 1948 he became the first popular Chief Minister of Bhavanagar State and later Deputy Chief Minister of Saurashtra with Shri U.N. Dhebar as the Chief Minister. It was a Gandhian dream team in public service in Saurashtra which had the honour of being

Gandhiji's birthplace.

Shri Balwantbhai also became a member of the Constituent Assembly of India and later General Secretary of AICC with Pandit Nehru at its President. I should add that he was also the best informed historian of the freedom movement in the princely states.

Shri Balwantbhai was elected to Parliament in 1952 and distinguished himself as Chairman of Estimates Committee and Chairman of the Committee on Democratic Decentralisation. His work in those areas of public accountability and self-government at the grassroots was monumental. After my election to Lok Sabha as an Independent MP in 1962 and before he became the Chief Minister of Gujarat on September 19, 1963 (it was on 19th September in 1965 that he left for his heavenly abode), I happened to ask him why he did not suggest a constitutional amendment to establish Panchayati raj and the third tier of government, his answer to me

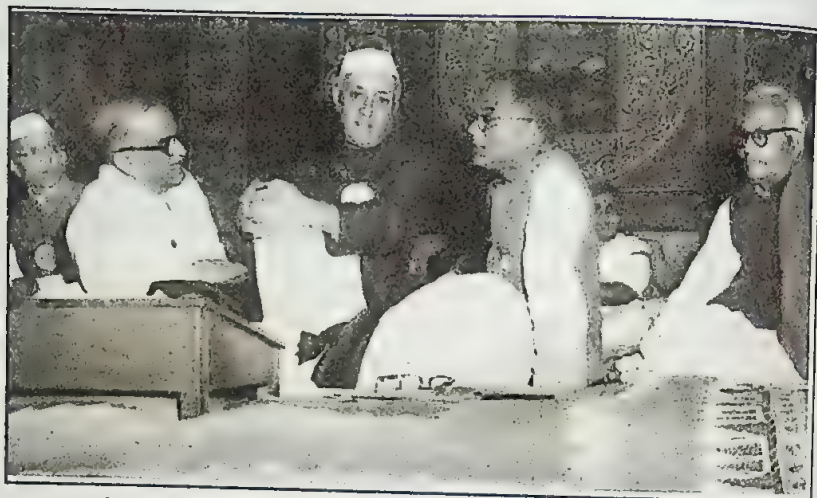
was mid-way between the answer given to me by Pandit Nehru (who said 'we must wait for a few years') and the answer given to me by Shri Jayprakash Narayan (who said it was a very good idea to integrate the third tier of government into our constitutional system to start with Shri Balwantbhai said to me, "that is the job I would like to entrust you with. Start working on it now, prepare the ground for it, and a day will come when the country will be ready for it". Little did I know at that time that I would have a lifelong involvement with Panchayati raj as Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Status for Panchayati Raj Institutions appointed by All India Panchayat Parishad (founded by Shri Balwantbhai), that I would be Chairman of Balwantrai Mehta Foundation, and that I would be called upon by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to head the Government of India Committee on Revitalisation of Panchayati raj institutions. It was through this committee that I pushed the constitutional amendment (more

**He had an instinctive as well as intuitive understanding of situations and of human beings with an objectivity and pragmatism all his own.**

or less on the pattern of my ideas and endeavours in 1960s, 1970s and 1980s) which has now become a part of our Constitution. Throughout those years, it was the legacy of Shri Balwantbhai which inspired me. He was the true architect of the conceptual initiative of swaraj at the grassroots. Unfortunately, we allowed the system to languish and to recede into moribund inertia. The Constitutional Amendment proposed by me and my Committee and eventually adopted by the Parliament and the country was meant to rescue the potentialities of Panchayati raj institutions which Shri Balwantbhai had envisaged and envisioned. His birth centenary year is an occasion for us to examine the operational pitfalls in the system and to streamline it with all the resources at our command. That would indeed be

a true and faithful tribute to the memory of Shri Balwantrai Mehta, for Panchayati raj is his most precious and enduring legacies.

Shri Balwantrai Mehta was not only a popular leader, and a veteran and valiant freedom fighter; he was also an able administrator. He had an instinctive as well as intuitive understanding of situations and of human beings with an objectivity and pragmatism all his own. He was simple, frugal and sincere. He was acutely sensitive to social injustices and inequities. In 1966, Dr. Zakir Husain (then Vice-President of India) recalled how "even before Gandhiji began his Harijan Yatra all over the country to awaken the nation's conscience against the stigma of untouchability, Shri Balwantrai Mehta left his usual place of residence in Bhavnagar to stay



**Shri Morarji Desai, Dr. B.C. Roy, Pandit Nehru and  
Shri Balwantrao Mehta (Extreme right)**

away in a distant Harijan colony, inviting private criticism if not social ostracism". That was the measure of his courage and convictions. That was also the measure of his concern and empathy for the downtrodden and for those upon whom the society had unjustly inflicted intolerable social atrocities.

In Shri Balwantbhai's birth centenary year, we pay our tribute to the quality and character of our freedom fighters who received their pupilage from Mahatma Gandhi. Shri Balwantbhai, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi

fulfilled the qualities his mentor and master looked for in a public worker. He was "clear as a crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault". He was a man "of strong mind, great heart, true faith and ready hands", a man whom the lust of office could not lure, a man who had a mind and a will of his own, a man who had honour and who was selfless, "a man who lived above the fog in public duty and private thinking". To such a man of substance and quality we pay our centennial tribute of respect and admiration. □

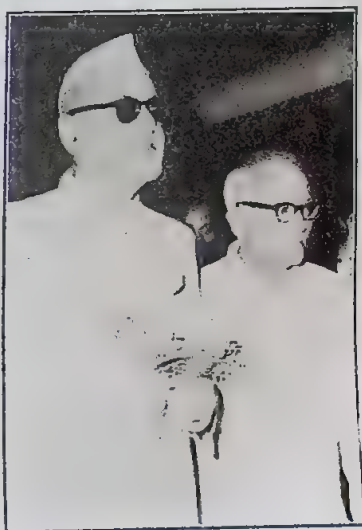
# Balwantrai Mehta

## As A Leader

ZAKIR HUSAIN\*

So long as there is panchayat rule in our country, Balvantray Mehta's name will be remembered and cherished.

**I**N the nineteen-twenties, there were hundreds of students who gave up their studies in Government schools and colleges and answered the call given by Mahatma Gandhi to join the nation's struggle. Many more did the same in 1930 and 1932 to take part in the civil disobedience movement. But not all of them could stay the course. Among the illustrious many who remained true to their first instincts and to the vows they took at the time of initiation into the successive battles of freedom was Shri Balwantrai Mehta.



Shri Mehta's work in the Congress party after 1947 and in the States Peoples' Conference

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*\* Dr.Zakir Husain sent this to Dr.Munshi on Jan. 23, 1966. He was then Vice-president of India.*

## Centenary Tributes

Even before Gandhiji began his Harijan Yatra all over the country to awaken the nation's conscience against the stigma of untouchability, Shri Mehta left his usual place of residence in Bhavnagar to stay away from the crowded city, in a distant Harijan colony. This was no doubt an inconvenient arrangement for a public worker like him. It also invited private criticism if not social ostracism. But he dared to do this. He had the courage and conviction to live up to the ideals which he had imbibed from Gandhiji and which he propagated far and wide in the country. We take this kind of courage for granted these days- though not all of us can practise it in our everyday life- but it was a rare phenomenon in 1931 and 1932.

prior to it is too well known to need recounting. In any case, persons closely connected with him during this period will have more to say. His interest in education was deep and abiding, and he was the first education minister of the princely states which formed the Union of Saurashtra. His work as a parliamentarian is fresh in our memory, and the most monumental aspect of it is his activities and reports as Chairman of the Estimates Committee.

There was no sector of our economy and no area of state activity which he did not have occasion to examine and report upon in those years of intense constructive thinking. The suggestions and recommendations lie embedded in almost a hundred volumes. While they have all seen the light of the day, many worthwhile guidelines have yet to fire our imagination and stir us to remedial or effective action. He may have found fault with persons and institutions, which

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## Centenary Tributes

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failed to discharge their responsibilities fully or to come up to the nation's expectation. But there is more in these reports of looking harking back censoriously to past mistakes.

His report on democratic decentralisation set the pattern all over the country for further devolution of administrative authority and for popular participation in matters of common concern which they had earlier discussed and decided in common. **So long as there is panchayat rule in our country, Balvantray Mehta's name will be remembered and cherished.**

His concern for the villagers found fresh expression when he agreed to preside over a committee concerned with the supply of drinking water in the countryside. We owe it to him that work on this is completed and the report implemented as soon as our resources and organisation allow.

If Shri Mehta was drawn by the fire of freedom, he had the qualities of leadership which enabled him to pass it on to others.

There must be today- and not merely in Gujarat- tens of not so young persons who were moved by Shri Mehta's example and precept either to join the Congress or to pursue one or the other of the many constructive activities through which Gandhiji mapped out the country's road to economic and social regeneration. He caught their imagination and gave the right kind of guidance and help- just as he had in his turn received this from the national leaders like Lala Lajpatrai and Mahatma Gandhi.

This is how freedom's battle, though baffled oft, is bequeathed from sire to son and is ever won. Shri Mehta was always on the look out for men of ability and character and he helped the young to take up higher responsibilities. This emphasis on continuity in leadership, with the old and tried making room for the new hopefuls, was one of his most endearing qualities. It enabled him to break through the barriers of isolation which surround those who rise to eminence. □

# Shri Balwantrai Mehta, Man of Vision

INDIRA GANDHI

Through his Report on Panchayati Raj he made a major contribution to the strengthening of democracy in the country.

**S**HRI Balvantrai Mehta was one of our veteran freedom fighters. Even before Independence, he was active in the constructive sphere as he was in the political field. He was a man of vision and tireless energy. He was not a leader merely of Gujarat, but functioned on a much larger national level. Because of his own wide range of interests and because of his considerable knowledge of men and matters all over the country, he had made a special place for himself in the hearts of all congressmen and congress women.

As General Secretary of the

Congress whilst Jawaharlal Nehru was the President, he was invaluable. His balanced judgement helped to solve many knotty problems, his conciliatory approach helped to avoid tensions and quarrels. No less notable than his work as a freedom fighter was his service as a parliamentarian and administrator. Through his Report on Panchayati Raj he made a major contribution to the strengthening of democracy in the country. His stewardship of Gujarat enabled that State to move forward.

He had worked closely with me as head of the Public Co-operation Committee of the Citizens' Central Council, handling social workers and

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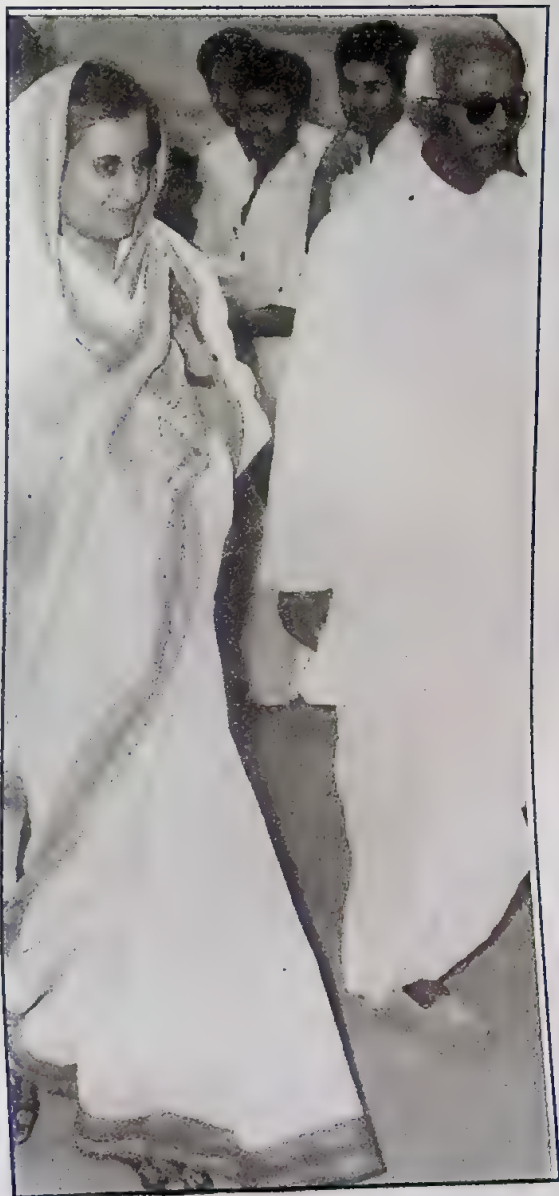
politicians of different parties with superb tact and consideration. He was a pioneer of the States' People's movement and helped the political unification of the country.

It was a shock to us all when his career was cut short in 1985 during the war Pakistan launched against us.

The Nation cherishes Shri Mehta's dedication to the people's welfare.



Smt. Indira  
Gandhi with  
Balwantrai Mehta



# A Composed Leader

LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI\*

**M**R. Speaker, Sir, we are deeply shocked to learn the sad news of the passing away of one of our very dear colleagues, Shri Balwantrai Mehta. That he and his wife should have passed away in such tragic circumstances is most painful. We cannot finally come to a conclusion of the cause of this accident. But there are reports, and the Gujarat Government has also said, that the plane was shot down by our enemy. Anyhow, further investigation will be made and we will come to the final conclusion soon. If it is so, he has died in harness and, if I may say so, it should be the wish of all of us that in fighting our enemy, if it comes to that, we should all be prepared to face this kind of death.

Balwantraiji was an old, old

worker since 1919 or 1920. He entered public life at a very young age and he distinguished himself in the field of the States' freedom movement. He became one of its top leaders and carried on his activities with great determination. He was a member of the Servants of the People Society and he served and worked in the political field on a very small allowance, an honorarium which he used to get from the society. It was a life of suffering and dedication throughout.

He was a member of this Parliament for two terms and he made an invaluable contribution in different committees over which he presided. As Chairman of the Estimates Committee, he made substantial contribution in suggesting reforms in different departments and ministries of the Government. He made many novel suggestions. His

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\* *The speech made by Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in Parliament on Sept. 20, 1965.*



Balwantraji Mehta with Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri

contribution in the decentralised sector, of course, was very substantial and we all know the great contribution he made in that regard.

He served in many capacities in Gujarat. But exactly two years back he took office on the 19th September, 1963 as Chief Minister and he passed away also exactly on the 19th. These two years of his term of office will always be remembered as a very successful term in which he was able to carry the whole of Gujarat with him. There might have been differences, yet he was a quiet, sober and sound leader. He was elected unanimously the leader

and the Chief Minister of Gujarat. During the most difficult times - as I have said earlier, even during the Kutch trouble and the Kutch difficulties - he was a composed leader, a man who never budged or deviated from the duties he discharging. He was one of our most able and efficient Chief Ministers. And, I must say, Sir, that his passing away has come as a rude shock to all of us. It is a great loss to our country and I know you all deeply mourn this loss. May I, Sir, request you to convey our condolences on the death of Balwantraiji and his wife to the members of his family. □

# Pioneer of Panchayat Raj

S. NIJALINGAPPA\*

He was real Nishkama Karma Yogi.

**I**T was in the middle thirties that I came into contact with Shri Balvantray Mehta. He was touring with the then President of the All India States Peoples Conference, Dr. Pattabhi Seetharamiah. Shri Balvantray was the Secretary. He, along with Dr. Pattabhi, toured most of the States throughout India and gave new life, new orientation and a new approach to the movement which then aimed at having responsible Government under the aegis of the respective rulers of the States.

I was impressed with Balvantrai's earnestness and directness of approach. He was unostentatious and soft spoken



but purposeful and impressive. He was an embodiment of quiet efficiency. That was the distinguishing feature of his many admirable qualities and continued to be so throughout his life either as member of the Servants of the peoples' Society, or as General

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*\* Shri Nijalingappa sent this article, when he was Chief Minister of Karnataka, on Mar. 3, 1966, to. Dr. K.M. Munshi.*

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## Centenary Tributes

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Secretary of the A-I.C.C. or as Chairman of the Committee for Panchayati Raj or as Chairman of the Rural Water Supply for the country or finally as the Chief Minister of Gujarat.

His was a life of dedication and during the course of the last about 30 years during which we came closer to one another, I never came across a single occasion when he thought about himself. He was real Nishkama Karma Yogi. How few are the leaders to Whom this description really applies?

Gandhiji's clarion call for the service of the Country in the early twenties had an immediate echo in the heart of young Balvantrai and he jumped into the fray and not only courted imprisonment but continued to serve wherever and whenever he was called upon to render service either in the political field or in the constructive field. His life was a saga of service and sacrifice.

His application to his duties was something unusual and rare. The reports of the Committees on Rural Water Supply and on

Panchayati Raj of which he was Chairman bear testimony to his deep study of the subjects to which he devoted himself with due attention to detail. I wish his report consisting of practical suggestions to solve the problem of rural water supply will be implemented in all the States with the help of the Central Government.

In this report on Panchayati Raj Institutions he has brought home in a most convincing manner the imperative necessity of accepting the principle of "Democratic Decentralisation". That report is proof of his deep understanding of the problem in all its aspects, his earnestness, his democratic convictions and his practical approach to this vital problem. It is a matter of satisfaction that the suggestions contained in the report are being implemented in various forms and stages in most of the States. If the Panchayati Raj institutions become a success, as they deserve to be and I have every hope they will, a substantial portion of the credit should go to Shri Balwant

## Centenary Tributes

Bhai. I am glad that wherever they have been working during the last about four years at least in my State, the Taluk Boards are a convincing success and I am sure very soon the Zilla Parishads will be functioning as successfully as Taluk Boards. It may take some time for the village Panchayats to get into stride. But I am certainly hopeful they will.

Shri Balwant Bhai was the General Secretary of the

All-India Congress Committee for quite a few years. I had innumerable occasions of coming into contact with him. He did not speak much but whenever he did he was listened to with respect and attention and whatever he said was to the point direct and disclosed a mind which was at once analytical and constructive. As Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee I found him

indulgent and so restrained and I often felt he could be more outspoken. He was helpful and all that came to him with the problems went back satisfied.

As Chief Minister of Gujarat he did much to bring about greater efficiency in the administration and Gujarat has been one of the best administered States. Balwantraji did contribute considerably towards that end when both outside and inside the ministry. The good traditions

helped him considerably. What all he did to serve the people of Gujarat is an open book and I need not dilate. His work during the short period of war with Pakistan and before that was one of extreme activity for him and his great capacity was tested and nothing was found wanting. Gujarat has been a deficit state from the point of view of food and year before last when the State

**If the Panchayati  
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Bhai.**

## Centenary Tributes



**Balwantrai Mehta with Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Nehru**

was in great trouble the way he appealed to friends to help the state was evidence of his deep humanity and appreciation of the situation and his desire to solve it.

The 19th of September 1965 the day of his untimely and most unfortunate death as a result of the murderous attack by the Pakistani plane, on the undefended small aircraft in which Sri Mehta was flying with his wife, he addressed the N.C.C. Cadets before his flight. That address discloses his fighting

spirit. He flew in spite of advice against it because he felt called upon to help his people who were subjected to hardships on account of the hostile activities of the enemy and that his duty lay by their side. He cared little for himself and he offered and sacrificed his life fighting and working to the last minute of his life.

The nation remembers him with gratitude and for all time. We can best serve the country and the people by following Balwantrai.



# A Noble Son of India

JAISUKHLAL HATHI\*

**O**N 19th September 1965, when Shri Balvantbhai and Sarojben were going from Ahmedabad to Mithapur, their plane was shot down by the enemy. It was an inhuman, mean and cowardly act to shoot down a civilian plane, unarmed and unescorted, but for Balvantbhai it was a noble death, the death of martyr laying down his life for the country. 19th seems to be an eventful day in Balvantbhai's life. Born on the 19th February 1899, he assumed office of the Chief Minister of Gujarat on 19th September 1963 and exactly two years later on the 19th September 1965, he left this mortal world.

Balvantbhai entered on his political career as a member of the Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad. It was a political body mainly



devoted to the problems of the people of Kathiawar (Saurashtra). In those days it was impossible for a subject of an Indian State to talk of independence, Swarajya or Freedom. It was at that time, that a band of workers like Balwantbhai, Shri Manilal Kothari and Shri Amratlal Sheth and others worked incessantly for the people of Kathiawar States and fought for the responsible

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*\* Shri Hathiji was Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Minister of Defence, and Chairman Bhavan's Delhi Kendra when he sent this article to Dr. Munshi on Dec. 28, 1965.*

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## Centenary Tributes

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Government in Indian States. He was also responsible for establishing the Rajasthan Praja Parishad. Later he was prominent member of the All India States Peoples' Conference. In 1927, he became a member of the Servants of People Society founded by Lala Lajpat Rai. As a Member of the society, he had come in close contact with our Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. We know now how deeply he was moved when paying tribute to Balwantbhai in the Lok Sabha.

He was a member of the Constituent Assembly and his contribution to the Constituent Assembly and Parliament is of no less significant. He made his mark as a thorough Parliamentarian. The Reports of the Estimates Committee of which he was the Chairman testify to his deep insight in all problems and the manner of handling all difficult questions. The manner in which he studied the questions that came up before the Estimates Committee, the manner in which he dealt with the officials of the Government and the way in which he carried his colleagues with him

won the admiration of all Members of Parliament. His power of organising was remarkable. Whatever task was entrusted to him he tried to organise it in an efficient and neat manner and produced quick results.

As the General Secretary of the Congress, he handled difficult problems and here too he showed commendable gift of handling such difficult problems. During his tenure as General Secretary of the Congress he had occasion to work closely with the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose confidence, love and admiration he won.

Of the Several good works to his credit, the most important is the Report of the Committee on Democratic Decentralization of which he was the Chairman. His name will go down in history as the founder of the Panchayat Raj in India.

As the Chief Minister of Gujarat he had won the love and admiration of all sections of people. The leader of the Swatantra Party in the Gujarat, Shri Bhilalbhai Patel, Paying him

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## Centenary Tributes

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a glorious tribute said that after he became the Chief Minister there are very few occasions when the opposition found the Government's goodwill and understanding missing. He was always prepared to accommodate the view of the Opposition. Citing an incident, he said :

"Before Balwantbhai became the Chief Minister, the practice in Gujarat was that the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee used to be the Finance Minister. The Public Accounts Committee have to scrutinise the accounts of the State, and the Committee with the Finance Minister as its Chairman, could not probably do justice to the work. Balwantbhai immediately appreciated this view point and its Chairman is now a non-official Member of the Assembly".

The development of Gujarat was upper most in his mind. Soon after he became the Chief Minister, he took up the question of industrial development, expansion of irrigation and power potentials and various other problems of development of the

State. After the Pakistani aggression on Kutch, he spared no pains to tighten the security measures for Defence of the border. Schemes for border roads construction, water supply, home guards, etc. received his constant and undivided attention.

Only a few hours before his death, he addressed a big rally of the N.C.C. To the Cadets he said : "We should all be prepared to lay down our lives in defending our country's honour, sovereignty and territorial integrity". Never did anybody dream then, that he would be the first to lay down his life so soon.

Balwantbhai will be ever remembered as a great freedom fighter, an educationist, a social worker, an able administrator and a national leader who gave to the country a lead in democratic decentralisation and in the establishment of Panchayat Rajya through which only can India grow from strength to strength and, above all, a noble son of India who sacrificed his life in country's cause.





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20th August 99

Dear Maj. General Kapur :

Dr. S.V. Narasimhan, the Chairman of our Chennai Kendra, who attended the Thanks Giving Meet for Kargil Heroes at Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai recently conveyed the total patriotic response of the audience.

Kargil history will be written in golden letters; the supreme sacrifices of our brave soldiers with dauntless courage leading to the success of the Operation-Vijay as a whole.

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With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(C. Subramaniam)

**Maj. Gen Kapur**

General Officer Commanding

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## THE EDUCATION INDIA NEEDS:

Swami Chinmayananda

"Education for becoming" rather than "education for knowing and doing" was the call given by Swami Chinmayananda. Education is not a process of merely emptying out the mind of the teacher, by pouring its knowledge into the minds of the student. Education is a feeling for the needs of the students and supplying them with right solutions.

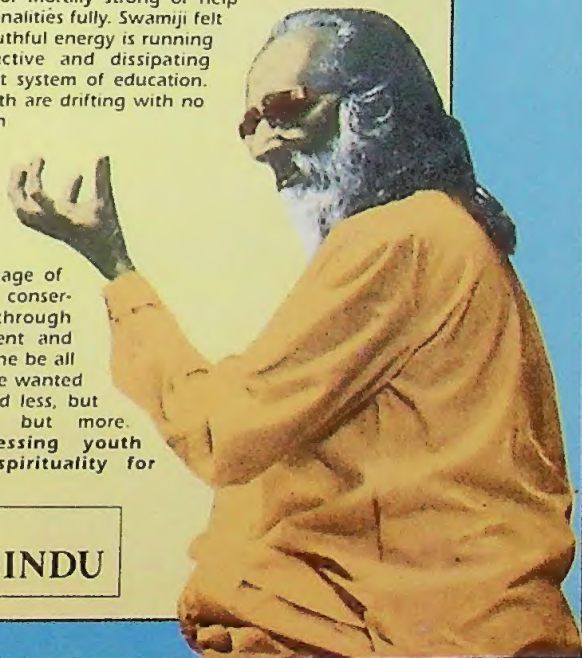
Education has to be holistic, it has to be rich in the sense that it caters to intellectual, emotional, moral, active and spiritual, all at once. Education should concentrate on personality development, acquiring knowledge of the world, adjustment with self and society and above all realisation of the permanent values of life. An educated man is "an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity".

Swamiji believed that a systematic culture of the mind and heart, the process of rearing and nourishing these, in other words liberal education, is the background against which the training of special skills should be imparted. In this sense true education is both 'a diving inward and a spreading outward!'.

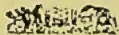
Sampoojya Gurudeva steadfastly believed that "Youth of today are not useless, but use less, they are not careless but cared less".

Revered Gurudev was apparently appalled at the purposelessness of the system of education that was being imparted to our youth, the flowers of our Nations even after political freedom, without the least regard for ancient culture and its noble value. Mere dissemination of information on certain topics going by the name of education would not make the youth wise or morally strong or help them to develop their personalities fully. Swamiji felt that a huge reservoir of youthful energy is running to waste through destructive and dissipating channels under the present system of education. The so-called educated youth are drifting with no aim or purpose in life. With fatherly love and saintly intuition, Gurudev unfolded a plan for personality development for the youth - Chinmaya Yuva Kendras.

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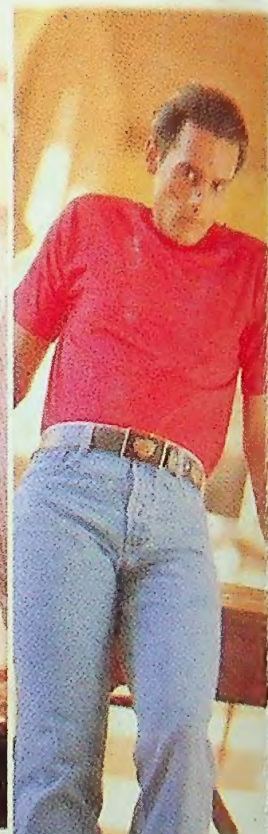
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